



Transylvania in the European Union

Bishop László Tőkés, President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, was elected Member of the European Parliament as independent candidate on the 25 November 2007 elections in Romania. In the election process, Bishop Tőkés was supported by six Transylvanian civil organizations – the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, the Szekler National Council, the Hungarian Civic Alliance, the Hungarian Civic Association, the Hungarian Youth Council and the Transylvanian Hungarian Youth – as well as by the Reformed Church in Romania.



The courage in faith of László Tőkés led him to oppose the inhuman communist dictatorship in Romania. The appreciation towards his unshakable resistance drove the multiethnic and multi-religious city of Temesvár (Timișoara) to revolt against atheist despotism. This resulted in the fall of dictatorship in Romania on 22 December 1989. Since then, László Tőkés has been internationally known as an emphatic representative of Christian values and defender of human rights.

"The representation in the European Parliament for the Hungarians of Transylvania brings new means and prospects, as it is a new contrivance to address to Europe which was often apolitical to our case. In the European Parliament I will be in continuous search of allies, with the help of whom I might effectively promote

and safeguard the values and interests of Transylvania's coexisting national communities, which reside alongside in strategic partnership. We are devoted to our homeland, identity, history and future – and yet we must often feel discriminated and humiliated as Hungarians in Romania. As Member of the European Parliament I had to make appeals

so that Romania's Hungarians do not feel as second rank citizens in their home country. Furthermore, I still need to speak up against the anti-Hungarian atmosphere, generated by Romanian politicians and tolerated by the government, which many times results in brutal assaults against Transylvanian Hungarians."

► “Despite repeated requests of the European Union, the situation of the 1.5 million strong Hungarian community of Romania had not been properly settled before Romania’s accession. Provided by the opportunity given by the representation in the European Parliament, I intend to find protection now in Brussels against the Bucharest politics characterized by pursuits to homogenize and centralize the country. In a wider context, it seems of utmost importance that the European Union seriously deals with the protection of ethnic and religious minorities for the sake of its stability. Although equality of chance, subsidiarity and self-government are fundamental principles for the European structure, and every eighth European Citizen belongs to an ethnic minority, the contracts and documents which control the functioning of the European Union are still not clear enough about the particular rights of national minority communities and the individuals who belong to these groups.

Upon my election as MEP of Romania, I also considered a priority to draw attention to particular issues which characterize the former communist bloc of the East-Central-European region. It is clear today that the fall of the communist regimes and our

membership in the European Union do not automatically mean our “re-Europeanization”. Almost two decades after the 1989 changes of regime in East-Central-Europe a virtual “Berlin Wall” is still dividing our post-communist societies from the free, democratic Western European societies. The issues of coping with the heritage of communist dictatorships as well as the lustration of communist agents are still topical. In Romania for instance, the absurd situation around the National Council for the Study of the Secret-Service Archives means a real danger that communists can maintain influence in all social and political fields and they will succeed in hindering the judicial reforms as well as the anti-corruption efforts. I am convinced that if we aim to create a unified Europe, a dialogue meant to clear up the aforementioned issues should also appear on the agenda of the European institutions.

I was committed to join the EPP-ED Group when my mandate began at the Parliament, since my political creed and calling as indicated in my election program is in perfect harmony with the objectives of the Christian Democrats. Some of my fellow Romanian representatives were however successful to block my EPP membership with completely

false and offending accusations. Indeed, I have always been strongly devoted to the guiding principles and standards of Christian spirituality which enhanced Europe’s might and reverence: respect for human dignity, solidarity, social security, honouring traditions related to family and nation, protection of the spiritual and natural environment, organic social and economic progress. I am sure that Europe will become the entity it once used to be – one of the great powers defining the future of humanity – if it returns to her Christian roots. My program entitled “For a Christian Europe” primarily aims to strengthen the Union’s Christian identity in a constantly transforming Europe.

As MEP of Christian background and as a bishop of the Reformed Church, I have been trying to involve Christian churches in the issues of the European Union more directly. I have been in consultation with European churches and ecumenical organizations. I wish to connect and serve in the European Parliament the endeavours of the Holy See, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches. Furthermore, the support and encouragement of Transylvanian Hungarian churches is essential for me.” – said MEP László Tőkés in April 2008.

“All peoples have the right to self-determination.”

(The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1.1)

The native Hungarian national community of Transylvania has wished for autonomy for 89 years, as granted by the international treaties which attached Transylvania to Romania. Hungarians of Romania have, as yet, been unable to reach this vital political objective. Romanian authorities say that the problems of Hungarians in Romania have been sufficiently solved, furthermore Romanian officials would like that the condition of Romania’s Hungarians serve as a model for other countries. However, facts speak about a different – very discouraging – picture. The peace treaties that attached Transylvania to Romania (1920 and 1948) granted broad rights to Transylvanian ethnic minorities. Romania assumed full responsibility to provide these rights. These international obligations have never been observed by the Romanian state. But on the contrary: governmental oppression of ethnic minorities caused that the more than 50% (1918) of non-Romanian inhabitants of Transylvania decreased below 25% (2002). The fall of the communist dictatorship (1989) offered a very good chance to establish the autonomy of Romania’s Hungarians. Despite the chances offered, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania has failed to achieve this objective.

The voters of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania had a dilemma for quite a long period. Did they authorise the Alliance, as the only possible option to vote for, to safeguard the interests of the Hungarian community of Romania in the Romanian Parliament? Or shall the Alliance govern Romania by all means? Even if abandoning the most vital claims for the survival of the community? The Alliance set the record of the longest presence in the Romanian government since the fall of communist dictatorship. Briefly, since 1996 to present, the Alliance took advantage of all governing opportunities regardless of character of the majority political forces. This kind of opportunism and that the Alliance abandoned vital demands for the ethnic Hungarian community in Romania as a governing factor, drove László Tőkés to formulate sharp criticism on several instances as Honorary President of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. The Alliance leadership therefore decided to abolish the function of honorary presidency in their statutes...

“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition...” (Hebrews 10:39)

An extensive movement to continue the struggle to attain Hungarian minority self-determination in Transylvania was initiated on 1 February 2003. This movement led to the foundation of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, on 13 December 2003. As requested by the Hungarian community in the early 1990s, the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania wishes to attain political autonomy on three levels: (1) Self-government at the individual level (“personal autonomy”); (2) Special legal status for ethnic Hungarians in localities where Hungarians constitute a majority of the population; (3) Autonomy for the east Transylvanian Szekler Land region (where Hungarians constitute a majority of the population).

The Hungarian National Council of Transylvania produced draft laws on the aimed autonomy forms and submitted them in 2004 to the Romanian Parliament. The parliament refused to adopt the drafts despite these objectives were based on the will of Hungarians in Romania, and they were consistent with the rule of law practiced in European countries, and with bilateral international agreements, which protect the national identity of minority communities.

In autumn 2006, a round-table

discussion initiated by the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, aimed at drafting a joint strategy with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania to serve the best interests of the Transylvanian Hungarian community. Although it seemed the Democratic Alliance of Hungarian in Romania was also interested in such strategy, at the threshold of the campaigns for the European Parliament elections, Béla Markó, President of the Alliance announced that he did not see real prospects for coming up with a joint list of candidates. Hence, the Alliance established a list made exclusively up of own candidates. Despite the Alliance’s excluding attitude, László Tőkés accepted the challenge, so that the vital claims of the Transylvanian Hungarian community shall have representation in the European Parliament. “I would like to make it clear that I am ready to represent the entire Transylvanian Hungarian community in the European Parliament, not party interests. This is the point where my candidacy differs from others’. Of course, I will represent Romania’s interests as well, since the Transylvanian Hungarian community is part of it. In other words, I will fight for the well outlined national interests and the Transylvanian Hungarian national

ones as well. I hope these two will be at odds as seldom as possible in the Union”, stated László Tőkés.

On 25 November 2007 therefore democracy won in the Transylvanian Hungarian society. The Hungarian community managed to set themselves free from the guardianship of the post-communist Hungarian party, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. The Hungarian public life and politics in Romania have discovered a way out from the perpetual crisis and voted for a change.

Enjoying their trust and confidence, MEP László Tőkés defined the following essential tasks to represent and facilitate on a European level: overall advancement to European standards of the Central and East European countries belonging to the post communist zone; Romania’s authentic integration into the EU and its becoming a true European state; Transylvania’s European integration: the autonomy of the Transylvanian Hungarian community; territorial autonomy for the Szekler Land, based upon the principles of subsidiarity and local-government; spiritual reintegration of Hungarians throughout the Carpathian basin, as an organic part of European integration; promoting Christian values, in the spirit of integration in faith, ideas and soul.



László Tőkés opening the Jubilee Assembly of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, at Kolozsvár (Cluj), on 15 November 2008

COMMUNIQUÉ

The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian historic churches contentedly fulfilled the request of MEP László Tőkés to actively support his work at the European Parliament with their suggestions and ideas.

1. The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches appreciate the unique opportunity that through his mandate László Tőkés can authentically represent the interests of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches and their believers in the European Parliament together with other elected Hungarian-speaking representatives from Transylvania and the Carpathian basin. The clergy merrily acknowledges the fact that the Christian set of values can now be present in front of Europe's most important legislative forum in new and direct form.
2. The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches salute and assure their full support dedicated to MEP László Tőkés' mission to strengthen the Christian spirituality and identity in Europe with the help of his programme entitled *For a Christian Europe!*, as well as to assert those religious and moral values in the European Union and Parliament that originate in our Christian heritage. In the same time the church leaders respectfully request from all the Members of the European Parliament to support László Tőkés' distinct objectives as far as possible.
3. The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches were pleased to learn that MEP Tőkés had submitted an independent package of proposals to the Presidency of the European Parliament regarding the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. In the same time the religious leaders fully support the proposals aiming at: (1) the organization of an international Bible exhibition in the European Parliament; (2) the organization of the dual conference – one in Brussels, one in Transylvania – entitled *Christianity and Europe* for the sake of real ecumenical dialogue between churches; (3) the invitation of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the European Parliament.
4. In order to share from the financial resources offered by the European Union, the leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches recommend MEP Tőkés to possibly submit a motion for amendment to the current relevant laws so that the European Churches may win the right to participate in the competition for the EU funds.

5 February 2008, Nagyvárad (Oradea)

The Roman Catholic Archbishopric in Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia
Archbishop Dr. **György JAKUBINYI**

The Roman Catholic Bishopric in Nagyvárad/Oradea
Bishop **József TEMPFLI**

The Roman Catholic Bishopric in Szatmár/Satu Mare
Bishop **Jenő SCHÖNBERGER**

The Transylvanian Reformed Church District
Bishop Dr. **Géza PAP**

The Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District
Bishop **István CSÜRY**

The Unitarian Church
Bishop Dr. **Árpád SZABÓ**

The Lutheran Church
Bishop **Dezső Zoltán ADORJÁNI**

The Hungarian Baptist Alliance of Romania
President **István GERGELY**

European Integration and Autonomy for Transylvanian Hungarians

Even nowadays the representational organizations of autonomy are virtually under fire exerted by Romanian nationalism. We are confronted with the governing party, as well as with all the opposition and extremist parties. Adrian Năstase, former Prime-Minister and his party attempted to threaten the representatives and the supporters of the cause by resorting to nationalist and communist methods. Former President Ion Iliescu organized the High Council of Defence of Romania into the battle line against us.

Still, the tension seems to ease. It does even though in 2005 the Romanian Parliament voted almost unanimously against the Szekler initiative for autonomy. At this point the official standpoint represented by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania also slackened and its parliamentary representatives voted opposite to the majority.

Either way, the movement for the autonomy of national minorities can not be suspended anymore. We are aware of the fact that in order to accomplish self-government we need not only to reach a general Hungarian consensus, but we are supposed to negotiate an agreement with the Romanian partner as well. We have to trust our Romanian friends and those awakening political forces, which would never play off Hungarian interests against Romanian ones, but see these plans and their accomplishment only within the larger European context. We look upon the process of European integration as a process happening in parallel with the integration of our Hungarian community – which is deprived of rights – into the Romanian society, instead of the continuation of artificial assimilation, and as well as the spiritual reintegration of all Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. The realization of these objectives would imply the final and comforting settlement of our case.

Although the principles of equality of chances, subsidiarity and self-government are fundamental

within the European political structure, at the present moment the contracts and documents that define the functioning of the EU do not mention the particular rights of national minorities in a detailed and unambiguous way. A new European order is unimaginable for the Hungarian community in Romania without the settlement of this issue. Our concern is a comprehensible political rhetoric that is based upon explicit and unavoidable facts and reasons. This was completely neglected by those who have represented us up so far. We cannot abandon the means of an independent Transylvanian Hungarian foreign policy in favour of foreign policy of the Romanian state, even if this is the price of governmental participation in Bucharest. Participation in the executive power of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania should not exclude a brave and determined representation of our community interests in the foreign policy.

One of the most important tasks within the European Parliament is the compilation of a European Charta to protect the rights of minorities with normative resolutions. In other words, what Bucharest has been denying from us for two decades we should attain in Brussels: through international solidarity, internationalization of the minority issue, by applying the instrumental system of the European Commission. The aforementioned issue does not only have a human rights aspect, but a national security one as well. It is essential because in the first decade of the new millennium stability and security are key words of the European order. In the settlement of the individual and community rights of minorities in a European context we could launch the first initiative. Our duty is to do away with the “exemplary Romanian model of protecting minority rights”, which has been successfully sold by the Romanian foreign affairs and acknowledged by European great powers, but which, in fact,

sweeps real issues and problems under the carpet. Instead, we should create the **“Transylvanian Hungarian model”**, which would bring modifications concerning the attitude towards the problems of national minority communities and the practice of treating these instead of discussing the issue of state borders. The Transylvanian Hungarian model, in addition, sees the solution not only in securing the rights to use our mother tongue and care for traditions, which naturally are also important, but rather in establishing authority warranted by law, and public institutions elected by the community authorized with official jurisdiction. The distinction of the Transylvanian Hungarian model – compared to other models of minority politics in the European Union – is that it wants to achieve its objectives with non-violent, constitutional and democratic means. The challenge we are facing is to let Europe know about the peaceful, yet determined Transylvanian Hungarian endeavours, which coincide with matters of international security and to win the union’s support.

Several EU member states, regarding their population, territory and economic-spiritual potentials, are smaller than the Transylvanian region. Our present task is to reorganize and redesign this territory of the size of a whole country, so that it will become, still as part of Romania, an autonomous actor of the European Union. On this behalf we should look out for partners domestically and throughout Europe, in the European Parliament and in the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, so that we can finally confirm: we do not only pop up on the map of the European Union as a neglected province of a member state – Romania –, but Transylvania is finally truly and fully integrated into Europe.

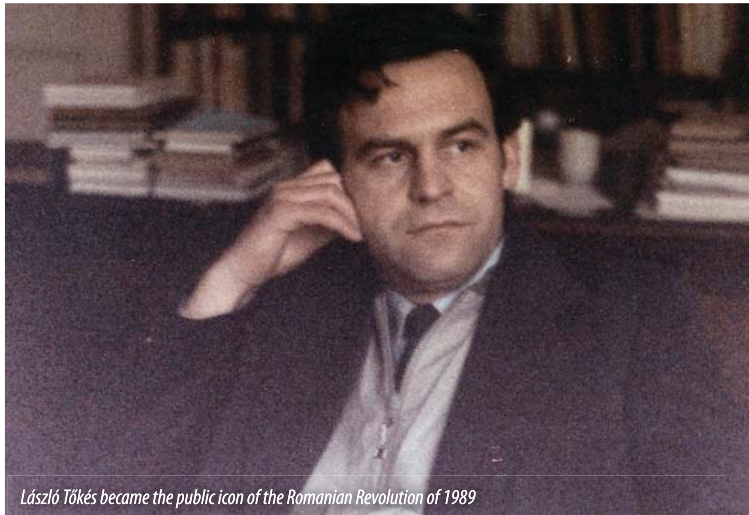
8 October 2008

László Tókécs,
Member of the European Parliament

The Bugaboo of Hungarian irredentism...

It is astonishing how in 2008 the phenomenon called "Hungarian irredentism" is still advocated by some as if they would represent a threat to Romania. Hungarians keep on attempting "to steal Transylvania from us". Furthermore, any demand for autonomy on behalf of organizations affiliated to the Hungarian minority in Romania is, at its turn, considered irredentist by the scarecrows and generators of artificial paranoia. In their view these represent "an attempt on Romania's territorial integrity".

László Tőkés, Hungarian Bishop and Member of the European Parliament, turned from the anti-communist hero into a real Nemesis of the scarecrows propagating the constant "threat" embodied by Hungarian irredentism.



László Tőkés became the public icon of the Romanian Revolution of 1989

Nonetheless, is there any basis of this integrity being threatened? Let us have a look at the background of this problem. In 1996 (at the end of the first session of the Social Democratic Party in Romania government) Romania and Hungary signed a mutual treaty, wherein they acknowledged the actual frontiers as they were established in the 1947 Paris Treaty, after WW II. The treaty was ratified by the governments of both countries. In addition, up to the present day there was no such Hungarian government that would have shown the slightest sign or inclination to denounce the terms established.

Moreover, since then, both countries became allies in NATO, and became members of the European Union. This very fact warrants a 100% certitude that the Romanian-Hungarian frontier would not be modified. The concept of frontiers, anyhow, will become less and less relevant proportionate to the strengthening of the European integration through the four major fundamental liberties of movement (for individuals, goods, services and capital).

All democratic Hungarian parties respected the treaty. Furthermore, the fact that the Hungarian Socialist Party, the FIDESZ and the Party of Free Democrats, just like the Romanian Social Democratic Party, the Democratic Party

and the National Liberal Party all belong to the three greatest European Parties, namely the Socialist Party, the European Peoples' Party and the Association of Liberals and Democrats, is an extra guarantee. If one regards the fact that the number and proportion of Hungarian residents in Transylvania is in a continuous decline – it hardly reaches 20% – a territorial revendication will sound ridiculous.

Nevertheless, the "bugaboo of irredentism" would still linger on.

... and the Double Measure

It is thought provoking how agitators of this phenomenon will not assume the same attitude when a potential territorial revendication for Romania at the expense of other states comes into picture. The main targets are the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine. In both cases, Romanian irredentism turns into a wish not only justified, but utterly desired as well, even if Romania has pledged itself for the realization of several international obligations.

If the mutual treaty with Hungary is sacrosanct then, having in mind the rules of international law and the principle "do not do to others what you do not wish for yourself" the bilateral treaty with the Ukraine signed in 1997, ratified by both parliaments, should be treated in the same sacred way as well.

Nevertheless, it is here that the double measure and Romanian irredentism (which is not propagated in an official way) intervene. The Romanian irredentism is "good", while the Hungarian one is "bad". (...)

Regardless of historical circumstances, we are now in 2008 and not in 1940. Romania has responsibilities, primarily the ones assumed by its EU membership. These obligations do not allow the state to act in whatever ways it pleases neither to formulate territorial needs at the expense of the neighbouring countries. At the end of 2001, Romania had to modify its law on citizenship and to suspend the rapid procedure of obtaining Romanian citizenship by those whose parents and grandparents were Romanians before 1940.

The suspension of legislation took place two weeks before the introduction of the Schengen visas controlling the travel in Europe for Romanian citizens. This coincidence should serve as food for thought for Romanian irredentists. In the period between 1991 and 2001, 100,000 persons from the Republic of Moldova received back their citizenship. Their number decreased to approximately 3,500 after 2002. (...)

Petru Clej (Romanânia Liberă, 19 May 2008)

“From Timișoara to Brussels” –

... was one of the key slogans of my campaign for the European Parliament elections in Romania. It is an important circumstance that the December 1989 uprising – which started the Romanian change of regime and concluded in Romania's joining to the European Union – grew out from religious soil, namely from the Reformed Congregation of Temesvár (Timișoara). Furthermore, the strong solidarity between local churches made the popular uprising victorious. This or other ideological associations may contribute to the realization that the road once commenced should be continued in the same way and political context: in the light of both Christian and Democratic principles and values. Taking into consideration the aforementioned, I instantly applied for admission into the EP fraction of the **European People's Party** (Christian Democrats) as I was elected Member of the European Parliament. Previously, **Wilfried Martens**, President of the European People's Party assured me about his support regarding this intention. I thought that it stood to reason that my application for the EPP membership would be also backed up by the Romanian EPP-member political parties. In this respect, I contacted the Romanian **Democratic Party**, and I succeeded in obtaining a private hearing from Romanian State President **Traian Băsescu** on 5 December 2007.

The primarily objective of my visit – in the company of **Zsolt Szilágyi**, chief of my cabinet and **Tibor T. Toró**, Member of the Romanian Parliament – to the State President was to prevent eventual conflicts. I wished to officially inform the State President and the Romanian political structure about my future strategy: (1) close cooperation with the other 34 Romanian representatives in the European Parliament; (2) an enthusiastic commitment in sustaining **Romania's** general interests besides supporting the interests of the Transylvanian Hungarian community.

I considered making all these facts plain not only due to the general



LASZLO TOKES, THE PASTOR WHO HELPED TO FREE ROMANIA, IS HOME

In Cluj, the capital of the Romanian province of Transylvania, the 15th-century Reformed church is under a joyous state of siege. There is a throng in the cobblestoned square, high excitement and a new, hopeful longing everywhere. Though services are still an hour away, the city's ancient, twisting streets are also packed with Romanians in their Sunday best—fur hats and fur coats for the men, pleated skirts, black scarves and embroidered leather jackets for the women. Finally the doors to the church are thrown open, and the crowd surges past a 14th-century statue of St. George bravely thrusting his lance into a huge dragon. There is no small symbolism here: This crowd of about 3,000 has gathered to see and hear a latter-day dragon slayer, the Protestant minister Laszlo Tokes, 37, who lit the spark that ignited the revolution that at last brought down Nicolae Ceausescu, Romania's monstrous dictator. Now, on this Jan. 21, Tokes is returning to his hometown a national hero to deliver his first sermon since being banished from preaching several years ago. As he sweeps up the aisle, guarded by sol-

People Magazine, 5 February 1990

mistrust that had been artificially generated against me on behalf of the Romanian side, but all those machinations and discrediting campaigns that were initiated once I was elected an EP-representative. Now, I will not mention about the political attacks on behalf of several leaders of the **Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania** (DAHR). First and foremost I am referring to the discrediting campaign against me triggered by certain EP-representatives of the Romanian Democratic Party at Brussels to possibly block my admission into the European People's Party. Since my election, **Jean Marinescu** and his party colleagues labelled me “an extremist” and charged me with “the intention of detaching Transylvania from Romania” in front of European politicians. At home, others called me an “aggressive nationalist”, whereas the media, once my name came up, started speaking about the “Kosovo-precedent”. Actually **Adrian Năstase**, the post-communist premier went the furthest with these charges claiming that due to my election “... Hungary has attained another MEP, while Romania has lost one.” I distanced myself from these charges and assured President Traian Băsescu of my constructive and collaborative objectives. I wish to seize the opportunity and

reassure the Romanian political parties and the public opinion about my aforementioned pledges, since we should not forget the prerequisite that in a healthy European democracy what the Hungarians benefit from, will do good for the Romanians as well. Evidently, the formula also works the other way round. And regarding the root of the clash of views between us: reasonable discussions should take place concerning the **autonomy** for the Transylvanian Hungarian community and the Szekler Land, within the frameworks of the democratic constitutionality and the European Union's political correlations. Consequently, we are supposed to reach mutual agreement, the most favourable method for this being a Hungarian-Romanian round-table political discussion. It is well-known that President Traian Băsescu welcomed our proposals and initiatives concerning the conceptions for improving the Hungarian-Romanian relation. And it was President Băsescu who came up with the idea of me joining the Romanian group of the European People's Party. He promised that he would personally collate with the representatives of the Romanian Democratic Party and President Wilfried Martens about this issue.

▶ However, on 10 December 2007, on my very first working day in the European Parliament, I was compelled to face that in Strasbourg the representatives of the Romanian Democratic Party took up a position against my admission into the European People's Party. While the MEPs of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania assured me of their support, MEP **Petru Filip** declared that the Romanian delegation to the European People's Party: "...decided on a secret balloting that they would propose the fraction of the European People's Party not to include László Tőkés as member."

Momentarily, the issue came to a deadlock. The European People's Party postponed its final decision to this month.

All in all, it is highly unfortunate that, despite my previous efforts, a predicted Hungarian-Romanian conflict could not have been avoided. President Băsescu asked me not to burden Romania's entrance into the EP with a "Hungarian-Romanian dispute" by immediately raising the question of autonomy. Well, it was not me who caused hostility but the Democratic Party, which by this affair also tensioned the Romanian political ties with the Hungarian FIDESZ.

The developments concerning my EPP-membership and the rejecting attitude assumed by the Romanian side might be motivated by the following:

- They hinder my admission not because of the publicly asserted baseless rumours and calumnies, but, as opposing to the "comfortable partnership" maintained with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, my presence in the European Parliament thwarts the nationalist minority-politics represented and successfully enforced by the Romanian side till this moment.
- As a political scientist put it once: "Elbowing out László Tőkés from the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania was largely due to Romanian desire." On this occasion they again strive to push me out, this time however from engaging into politics in Europe.
- It is a common knowledge that the Democratic Alliance

of Hungarians in Romania, in exchange of becoming a governing party, renounced to the **own foreign affairs of Transylvanian Hungarians**. The Romanian foreign policy finds it unattractive that the cause of the Transylvanian Hungarian community could yet be presented in an open forum in Europe. Furthermore, it is aware of the fact that the European Union may offer a real chance and its strongest political community, the European People's Party, may provide real support for attaining autonomy for our national community.

Having all these in mind, a way out of the present intricate conflict may only be possible by considering the viewpoints of the other side, by **dialogue and negotiations**.

I suggest that President Băsescu assumes the role of the mediator in order to discontinue this opposition with the Romanian Democratic Party. This is not merely the Transylvanian Hungarians' interest, but Romania's as well.

The Romanian Democratic Party should re-examine the rejecting attitude assumed by its EP delegation, the more so since the EPP-membership of its three "democratic-liberal" representatives raises more doubts than anything else.

The fact that the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania is the member of a Romanian government of liberal majority, while in the European Parliament they work together with the Democratic Party – being in opposition to the Romanian government – should induce the Alliance to take up a more deliberate position than ever. The Alliance, which I am also member of, should not be interested in obtaining a – Transylvanian Hungarian – monopoly position in the European Parliament by the exclusive support of the Romanian Democratic Party.

It is the mutual interest of all of us that the New Year and the representation of our country in the EP start in the light of mutual cooperation.

Melbourne, 3 January 2008

László Tőkés

Contributions to a story alien to European mentality

MP Petre Străchinaru, Executive President of the Democratic Party in Covasna County, expressed his anxiety for Bishop László Tőkés, who "will disseminate the Hungarian **aggressive nationalism** to its extremist extent within Europe" (*Daily Jurnalul Național*, 12 December 2007).

"I voted against Mr. Tőkés's admission, because all his followers and every piece of material and document published on his personal site refers to and propagates the **autonomy** of the Szekler Land. Subsequently, I considered that Mr. Tőkés should not join such a political group that does not support the **change of frontiers**, fact firmly established in its statutes. In 2007 as members of the European Union we should not have such an approach, i.e. for the change of frontiers. Additionally, the situation of the national minorities in Romania is a particularly favorable one." (MEP Marian-Jean Marinescu's communiqué – *Ziua*, 4 January 2008)

"We would like to draw your attention especially upon the fact that two recent declarations issued after his election in the European Parliament, state that **Transylvania and Banat (two regions from Romania) are non-Romanian territories...** And finally, please take note of the fact that **this topic regards solely Romania** and that any attempts of **involvement** from other Member States are completely inappropriate." (Communiqué of MEP Sorin Frunzăverde and MEP Marian-Jean Marinescu, 31 January 2008)

"This is a dead case ... We, i.e. the Democratic Liberal Party agreed upon this issue and we negotiated even with the **Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania**, so we know how to handle this case. (...) László Tőkés is member of the Romanian delegation. If everyone does and says whatever s/he likes and makes statements according to their own will that shall not be expedient." (MEP Petru Filip's declaration, www.erdon.ro, 8 February 2008)

"Mr. Tőkés is proving what we all are aware of: that his political agenda has only one point, to gain electoral support by **empoisoning the relations between Romanians and Hungarians** in Romania. His entire political career is based upon this strategy..." (Circular to Members of the European Parliament of MEP Rareș Niculescu, 27. March 2008)

Declaration

Brussels, 9 April 2008

Ending today my non-allied status that I have held since I was elected Member of the European Parliament, I hereby declare that I will continue my activity as Member of the **European Free Alliance** Group (EFA) of the European Parliament.

My strong ties to the Hungarian Delegation of the European People's Party prior to my joining the European Parliament have led me to request membership in the **European People's Party – European Democrats** Group (EPP-ED). Considering the fact that my EPP-ED Group membership has been delayed for months because of the impediment of the Romanian Delegation to the European People's Party, I have withdrawn that request, and have decided to join the EFA Group.

I would now like to extend my thanks to all those who have supported my EPP-ED Group membership. On a different note, I would like to express my regrets that certain members of the Romanian **Democratic Liberal Party** have "exported" their anti-Hungarian prejudices to the European Parliament as a continuation of the communist and nationalist political traditions; and through their subversive and hostile behaviour they successfully managed to apply their discriminative and anti-minority politics against my person. I continue to remain of the opinion, in the spirit of my – initial – agreement with Romanian State President **Traian Băsescu**, that all the thirty-five elected MEPs of our country should jointly represent at the European Parliament the interests of Romania – including those of the Hungarian minority.

My joining the EFA Group is based on the **community of values** that brings and holds us together. The EFA Group of the European Free Alliance struggles for

"stateless nations, regions and discriminated national minorities"; and aims to achieve respect for human rights, protection of autonomy rights of peoples, the application of the principles of decentralization and subsidiarity, support for linguistic and cultural diversity in a common Europe of nations and regions. Their commitment to protect our environment, which is manifested through their euro-parliamentary alliance with the **Greens**, is equally part of our common set of values.

The **ties connecting** us to the European Free Alliance and their MEPs can nevertheless be traced back to the past. As supporters of our Hungarian minorities and our autonomy-efforts they have in the past years on numerous occasions welcomed the representatives of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, the Szekler National Council and the Hungarian historic churches of Transylvania.

Finally I would like to say thanks to the President of the EFA Group, Mr **Ian Hudghton** and to his Colleagues for welcoming me into their Group. In solidarity with the European nations, regions and autonomous communities they represent, I consistently aim to continue the fight for freedom to which the spirit of **1989** and the city of **Temesvár (Timișoara)** oblige me. As a motto of our cooperation, allow me to quote from the recent letter of EFA President **Nelly Maes** to the founder of the EFA, Mr Maurits Coppieters: "Being a Fleming to become a European". Applying this to the Hungarians of Romania, we could say: "Being Hungarians to become Europeans".

9 April 2008
László Tőkés

László Tőkés joins European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in European Parliament

www.e-f-a.org

EFA Group President Ian Hudghton MEP has welcomed the decision of László Tőkés MEP to join the EFA Group in the European Parliament, part of the Greens/EFA Parliamentary Group. The decision was approved at a meeting of the group held today. The Right Reverend László Tőkés was elected to the European Parliament in November 2007 as an independent member representing the Hungarian community in Romania. He has been Bishop of the Reformed Church since 1990 and is a long standing defender of human rights and civil liberties in Romania. Bishop Tőkés was a strong critic of communist dictator Ceaușescu and attempts by the totalitarian regime to remove him from his post as an assistant pastor in Temesvár (Timișoara) and evict him from his home helped trigger the events that led to the Romanian revolution of 1989. Welcoming the move, Ian Hudghton MEP commented: "It's a pleasure to welcome László Tőkés to the EFA Group. Although only a member since November

last year, he has already gained a reputation as a strong advocate for the rights of the Hungarian community in Romania. His peaceful opposition to the former totalitarian regime in Romania is well known and widely respected. He undoubtedly has a very important contribution to make as a member of the European Parliament." László Tőkés said: "I am pleased to have been welcomed to the EFA group in the European Parliament. Defending the rights of linguistic and national minorities in Europe, with a clear emphasis on fairness and social justice, is a clear priority for the EFA group. This new association will I'm sure be mutually beneficial as I continue my work for Romania's Hungarian community here in the European Parliament. Today's announcement follows long term co-operation with the European Free Alliance and Nelly Maes in particular has been very helpful in raising issues of common concern. I'm now looking forward to working with the other EFA MEPs as parliamentary colleagues."

Facing the Communist Past

Brussels, 5 March 2008

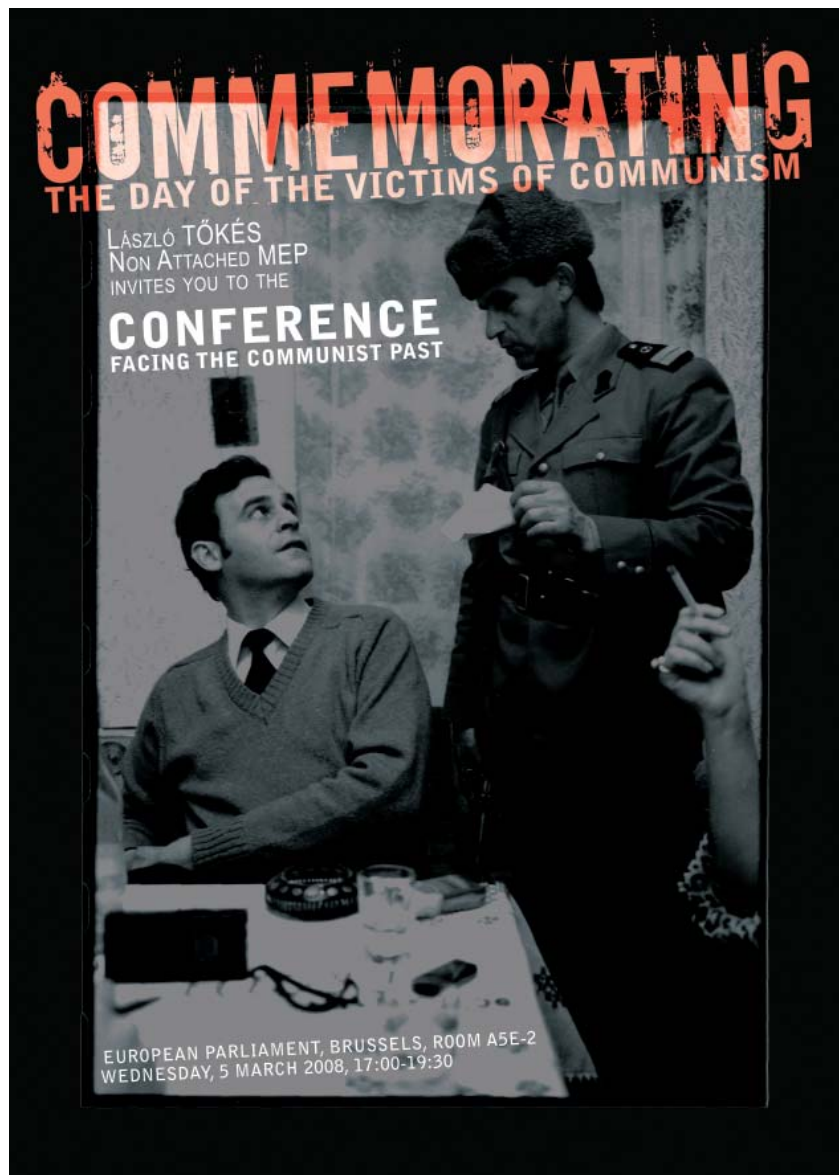
Speech commemorating the Day of the Victims of Communism at the European Parliament

Since the turn of the century, it has been a tradition in Hungary and the Hungarian community living outside its borders to commemorate the Day of the Victims of Communism. On 25 February 1945, the Soviet forces arrested and took captive **Béla Kovács**, a leading figure of the democratic Smallholders Party. This year and every year, we commemorate the millions of innocent victims of the totalitarian dictatorship on 25 February.

This tradition inspires us, in 2008, to remember – here in the European Parliament – the heroes and the victims killed by the communist regimes. Moreover, we elected to organize a conference, gathering specialists, in the process of coping with the past, and searching for reconciliation. (We hold the event today, a week after 25 February, for reasons that are exclusively technical and practical).

Upon my election as a Member of the European Parliament from **Romania** last November, my priority became the European representation of the former communist countries of the East-Central-European region. It is clear today, that the fall of the communist regimes and our formal membership in the European Union does not automatically mean our “re-Europeanization”. After almost two decades, the “**Berlin Wall**” still stands between our post-communist societies and the free, democratic Western Europe. Only by breaking, once and for all, with the communist heritage and nationalist past – that still binds, clings, and draws us back – can our region, torn by communism, become truly “European” again. The democratic change of regime will be complete, legitimate, and honourable, only through a revival of European Christian values.

The Romanian change of regime started in December **1989**. The popular uprising began in our Reformed Congregation in **Temesvár/Timisoara**, leading to the fall of the Ceausescu regime.



At that time and in that place – by breaking through “the wall of silence” – we made the first steps towards a reunited Europe. We need to continue on this path. “The spirit of Temesvár/Timisoara” compels us to face our past and, once and for all, to get rid of the remnants of the old regime that hinder us from moving forward.

On my way to Brussels, it was with great pleasure that I learnt of the efforts which seek to reunite our continent, tragically divided throughout the entire 20th century. The project to create the **United Europe – United History** working group as well as the **Truth, Justice and Reconciliation** parliamentary

committee offer great hope. Separately, they promote the process of coping with the recent past, long-lasting effects, and consequences of the totalitarian communist regime, which encompassed the East-Central-European region and the former Soviet Union.

In the future, these forums could become arenas for discussion, meaningful contemplation, and avenues for realizing most of our intentions. Recalling the last Balkan war, we can only build a new and united Europe by removing our history of “land mines.” These land mines include: two World Wars and the Cold War. Through cleansing, healing, and restoration, our old

- ▶ wounds can bond us together, utilizing our “under mined” land to rebuild a united Europe.

Frankly and truthfully, coping for us, who lived through communist oppression and its hindering heritage, has been unexpectedly and extremely difficult, over much of the last 20 years. We, who witnessed the bitter and difficult process of post-communism transition, know this best.

In the area of investigation, we have already seen results. Once allowed to speak up again, hundreds of memoirs, books, and publications appeared, serving as a basis for **legitimately disclosing, understanding, and chronicling our history**.

However, this is still not enough. There has been no **moral catharsis** following such disclosure. The credible process of confession, repentance, and visible change is non-existent, as is any devout apology, accompanied by full restitution and genuine remorse. The moral values of society will not be restored, until moral judgment is rendered, against the guilty.

Further, like a chameleon that changes its colours, or a caterpillar that changes its form into a butterfly, in concealed and consequential ways, surviving its purported “fall,” communism has returned. By transferring its power to selected persons, communism continues to persist in its habitual heritage of dishonest distortions that hinder truth, genuine change, and a regeneration of society.

Despite all the important achievements since 1989, the greatest shortcoming is the absence of any “moral” accounting. This “human deficit” in the post-communism “ledger of life” poses an extreme disadvantage for social progress on multiple levels.

After the fall of Nazi Germany, the “**Nuremberg War Crime Trials**” prosecuted the prominent members of the political, military and economic leadership. The “**trial**” of the mass murderers of “fascist communism” (in the words of the great poet Attila József) still needs to take place. Until the deep “wounds” are addressed, the healing process cannot even begin.

We need a **moral catharsis** to heal our respective societies. The subtly manipulated post-communist societies have witnessed a tendency to conceal their past, and even fall into amnesia. Moreover, these societies have been repeatedly supporting their former oppressors to seize power again, and have become the docile followers of their oppressors.

But not even the democratic world judging fascism in an exemplary way has performed any better. “Europe remains silent, always silent” – we can conclude regarding their attitude, citing the great Hungarian poet **Sándor Petőfi**.

For example, after almost 20 years, our Reformed Church in Transylvania observes with dismay that our international ecumenical organizations are still delinquent in judging the wrongdoings of the atheist communist dictatorship. Likewise, it took just as long for the President of the United States to express a clear and moral judgment, regarding Vilnius, Lithuania, on the atrocities committed by Soviet communism, and his own country’s responsibilities in this matter. Again, it took until 2007, for Washington to honour the more than 100 million victims of the totalitarian world regime, by dedicating the Monument for the Victims of Communism.

Unfortunately, we do not need to go across the Atlantic Ocean to find a bad example. So many years after the fall of the Bolshevik dictatorship, the **European Union** owes first and foremost to itself, the world, the martyrs and survivors of communism, a resolution opposing communism. In this matter, the proposal of the Justice, Truth and Reconciliation workgroup of the European Parliament remains valid. Accordingly, similar to the 2004 congress of the European People’s Party, the European Parliament should issue a judgment on totalitarian communism.

The Polish exhibition, “**The Expelled**”, which opened yesterday at the European Parliament is a relevant example. It draws our attention to the fact that we must once and for all, reject the “double standard.” We must judge the inhumanities of the **German**

Nazi regime and the Soviet Communism, on an equal basis.

From a historical perspective, we should consider our former “Christian Europe”. Without our Christian values and traditions, the **European Constitutional Treaty** reflects a void in our heritage, which is a common loss for our society. While the formulation of the Constitution’s paragraphs stirs debate, it reveals the real problem: a **moral crisis** that characterizes our European cultures and societies. The Treaty debates themselves reveal our current character, reflecting ourselves in a mirror.

Europe overcame the profound crisis and aftermath created by the Second World War and Fascism, by judging it. And putting it on trial for the entire world to observe and perhaps learn. In contrast, Europe cannot face its communist past. Instead, it remains trapped in its communist past, thereby reinforcing its own crisis.

Considering the above, we need to face our communist past, and address its sins and wrongdoings. This is a moral obligation not only for the affected countries but also for the entire European community. After almost 20 years of insecurity and hesitation, we need to bring the historical and political trial of communism to its final conclusion.

In presenting the history of the 20th century, **Paul Johnson** called this period “the century of great lies”. We need to put an end to the lies of the past century. Then, we can start with a “new slate”. We cannot continue to “under mine” our future by avoiding the communist past.

“They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious”. “They heal with lies the misery of my people’s daughter”. “Peace, peace, they say, when there is no peace” – says truthfully Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah. 6, 14). The time has come to speak the truth in Europe. It is the only solid basis for peace and security. Because it is true, as Isaiah said: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.” (Isaiah 32, 17). So be it! (Amen)

5 March 2008
László Tóké

In opposition to communism – Conference and Commemoration

2009 marks the 20th anniversary of the Anti-Communist Revolution in Romania which started in Timisoara/Temesvár on 15 December 1989. The upcoming year of remembrance commenced with a conference on 20 September 2008, dedicated to the 20th anniversary since the **first public protest in Romania** against the plan of **destroying villages**.

In his speech of 29 April 1988, Romanian communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu outlined his plan for rural resettlement and announced that it had begun to be implemented. In subsequent speeches Ceausescu confirmed his determination to go ahead with the project and discussed its progress. The plan involved **bulldozing between 7,000 and 8,000 of the country's 13,000 villages**, replacing some of the surviving villages with "agro-industrial centres", and transferring the peasants to standardized blocks in these centres.

Realizing that the destruction of villages would deprive people — particularly the ethnic minorities — of their traditions and their cultural heritage, thus it would annihilate the native Hungarian community of Transylvania, Romania, the Reformed pastors of the Temesvár Diocese (Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania) signed a public protest against the "plan of rural resettlement" in September 1988.

Member of European Parliament **László Tőkés**, bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania, hosted the conference as co-editor of the protest. Besides promoting Christian devotion and values, MEP Tőkés' crucial objective in the European Parliament is to step up against the legacy of the past in the atheist-communist countries, which functions downright as impediment in progress. "Christian morals and opposition to atheist-communism were and still are in strong coherence", said László Tőkés in his opening speech. "Nowadays however, in our secularised societies, it is more and more difficult to undertake a Christian identity. Europe seemingly forgets

her past and denies her identity. Furthermore, the former communist countries of East-Central-Europe are seemingly forgetting about the inhuman conditions of their recent past; they may seem uncomfortable to look back to the 50 years of communist terror. And we experience with sorrow that the West is still hesitating to condemn totalitarian communism, despite it was just as evil as fascism."

Church historian Rev **János Molnár**, the other editor of the protest cited recently opened secret service files to reveal the reactions of the brutal communist machine of oppression, the infamous Securitate, to the unexpected ecclesiastic protest.

Dinu Zamfirescu, dissident who was living in France those times spoke about the well-coordinated actions against the village destruction plan of the Romanian emigrants.

Two hundred thousand people participated in a silent demonstration in Budapest on 27 June 1988 against Romania's rural resettlement plan. As one of the organizers, former Hungarian MP, **Zsolt Zétényi** spoke about the circumstances and effects of the solidarity demonstration.

Géza Szócs, editor of Romania's sole samizdat called *Opposite Viewpoints* ('Ellenpontok' in Hungarian) recalled the links between and the jeopardized situation of anti-communist dissidents of the 80s.

Reformed pastor of Poland, **Lech Tranda** emphasised the moral responsibility of churches in the opposition to atheist totalitarianism.

Church historian Rev **János M Hermán**, who was forced into exile in the 1980s, recalled the solidarity

of the Western world and reviewed a chronology of their protests against Romania's rural resettlement plan.

The conference concluded with a thanksgiving sermon at the Central Reformed Church of Arad, where Bishop László Tőkés preached the Word of God.

The commemorations continued on 21 September at Temesvár/Timisoara. Participants of the conference joined the Reformed church congregation of Temesvár in worship **to pay a tribute to the first victim of their consequent resistance against communist oppression**, church elder **Ernö Újvárossy**.

In October 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution birthed the deadliest mass killing force ever visited upon the human race: communism. In less than 100 years, communism has claimed more than 100 million lives. Today, it enslaves one-fifth of the world's people.

Being an outspoken critic of communist despotism, László Tőkés — then pastor of the Reformed Church of Temesvár — was threatened with dismissal from the congregation. Ernő Újvárossy was a key man in creating and maintaining church morale during the persecutions and he was the author of the petitions signed by the congregation members opposing László Tőkés' dismissal from Temesvár. Ernő Újvárossy had been prevented several times by the Securitate before he disappeared on 10 September 1989. He was found dead in a forest six days later

with every appearance of foul play. This brutal warning pre-signalled the massacres of thousands of protesters, which started on 17 December 1989 in the main square of Temesvár and continued in other large cities of Romania during the anti-communist popular uprising. The congregation wretched the grave of their martyr.

21 September 2008
Press Office of MEP László Tőkés

Debate

Proposed hearing of the Commission on crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by totalitarian regimes

The anti-Ceaușescu uprising in Romania started at my church. I have had painful experience of what communism really is and it is therefore with a sense of satisfaction that I note that the European Union's attention is once again focused on the criminal actions of totalitarian regimes. In cases of crimes against humanity committed in the eras of national socialism and communism the world still applies a double standard. Unlike the case of fascism, there has yet been no trial of communism. Both types of dictatorial regime suppressed freedom, human rights and churches. They

crippled the lives of their national minorities. The huge scale of human and social tragedy is common to fascism and communism. Political, historical, human and moral restitution has hardly begun and must be continued. Take the example of Romania and the Tismăneanu report. It is my conviction that, for the regime change begun there in 1989 to be complete, the events of the past must be confronted. Real European integration of former communist countries requires not just truth and restitution but also the condemnation of dictatorship.

Strasbourg, 21 April 2008

Letter

on clergy and communist secret services

To Commissioner **Jacques Barrot**
Vice President of the European Commission
Responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security

Dear Commissioner,

Throughout the twentieth century, East-Central-European countries experienced the dismays exerted by both **Fascist** and **Communist** totalitarian regimes. The absolutism of communism lasted ten times more than Nazi rule. Both of these trampled human and freedom rights underfoot and committed genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Keeping their **exclusivist politics** and **crimes** in view, as an inglorious yet organic part of our mutual European history, **we must judge both Fascist and Communist regimes with the same weight**. At the same time we are supposed to use this particular historical experience as a **didactic material** in order to safeguard human rights, legality, the fundamental right to freedom and other values which form the very basis of our European set of values. We must make the younger generation conscious that our present set of values is not formed automatically and one should not comprehend it as something absolutely natural. The gathering ground of modern exclusivist manifestations makes it necessary to reveal the roots of the past, as well as, to present it in the most objective way.

Recently, the institutions of the European Union, several member states and the civil sphere implemented the most important and exemplary steps in order to expose and condemn the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes, as follow:

- The European Parliament Resolution of 12 May 2005, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the European conclusion of WWII;

- Resolution No. 1481 of the European Council's Parliamentary Assembly of 26 January 2006, on the necessity of international condemnation of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes;
- The European Commission provides financial support for particular projects concerning the preservation of those homepages and archives which inform about deportations, as well as, for those designed for the commemoration of the victims of Fascism and Communism within the programme entitled *Europe for Citizens*;
- The resolution of the European People's Party of 6 February 2004, which initiates the establishment of an autonomous professional body in order to accumulate and evaluate pieces of information on the violation of human rights during communism, and urges the establishment of the Victims of Communism Memorial Museum;
- Several resolutions passed by national parliaments concerning the crimes of communism (In Romania for instance, based on the report compiled by the presidential commission led by Vladimir Tismăneanu, President Traian Băsescu called communism "illegitimate" and "abominable", therefore condemned the Romanian communist regime);
- The Prague Declaration of 3 June 2008, on European conscience and communism.

European citizens should be informed about crimes against humanity committed by the dictatorial communist regime to the same extent as they know about the Nazi horrors. We find it unacceptable that those who committed crimes in the name of **communism** have **not yet been summoned to face justice**. Furthermore, the **victims** and their relatives

► **have not been compensated.** Still, the several million victims of communism and their families are entitled to justice, sympathy, goodwill and the acknowledgement of their sufferings to the same extent as the victims of Nazism.

We should not postpone the **large-scale disclosure of the history of the communist period** any longer. For this reason it is essential that the contribution of every citizen of a particular country to the communist regime should be traceable and, if necessary, punishable.

Dear Mr Commissioner,

With reference to the process of **coping with the communist past** of Romania, allow me to inform you about a particular, church related issue. Officially communism identified itself as being an **atheist** regime, yet it never stopped to use churches for its own benefit. It is therefore inexplicable how in **Emergency Ordinance No. 24/2008** the **Romanian Government** decided to exonerate all **religious servants from the jurisdiction of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS)**. Some explained this phenomena with that, being at the threshold of parliamentary elections, they wished to obtain the sympathy and support of the churches in question. Then **Law No. 293/2008**, which replaced on 13 November 2008 the initial law on CNSAS, disposes that religious servants might only go through political screening if their own church leadership requests so.

This kind of partial and discriminatory treatment breaches the principle of democratic equality. This law is **anti-constitutional** since it transgresses the principles of equality in front of the law (stated in Article

16) and the right to information (Article 31). The right of equality is harmed even more because the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives recently ascertained that several Romanian high clergymen collaborated with the infamous political police and, if this law would remain valid, other colleagues of theirs would be exempted from giving an explanation for their past collaboration with the communist secret police.

Although the priest, who infringed the secrecy of confession, broke the law of his own church and damaged its reputation, the **Romanian Orthodox Church**, which is considered the national religion, **would do everything in its might just to achieve that its priests could not be held accountable for their collaborative activity.**

Without the pressure exerted by the European Union, Romanian legislature would keep on hindering the process of factual revealing of the totalitarian crimes, thus the effective fight against the violation of human rights. That is why I ask you, Mr Commissioner, for your intervention so this discriminative and inequitable law should be withdrawn.

As a **clergyman myself**, as bishop of the Reformed Church in Romania which suffered cruel persecution during communism, I also **have to reject** this antidemocratic law would privilege ecclesiastic servants thus hurting the dignity of the churches and the believers.

Sincerely,

24 November 2008

László Tőkés, bishop
Member of the European Parliament

European conscience and communism

What action does the Commission propose to take in response to Written Declaration 0044/2008 - P6_TA(2008)0439 adopted by Parliament on 9 September 2008, which proclaims 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism? What is the Commission's response to the Prague Declaration, adopted at the Prague Conference 'European Conscience and Communism' on 3 June 2008? Does the Commission support the Prague Declaration's proposal that an Institute of European Memory and Conscience be established, as a European research institute for studies on totalitarianism and as a pan-European museum/memorial for all the victims of Totalitarian Regimes, providing a comparison of crimes committed against humanity by Communist and Nazi Regimes? There have been more than 100 million victims of Communist regimes since the beginning of the 19th century. In many countries, even though Communist parties are not in power, they have not distanced themselves publicly from the crimes of Communist regimes nor condemned them. Is the Commission planning to identify those crimes as crimes against humanity? The Commission undertook to arrange

a series of hearings regarding victims of totalitarian regimes, with the purpose of calling for a Commission Communication. Will the Commission ensure that these meetings are completed and that their conclusions are published?

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure by *Jana Hybášková, Christopher Beazley, Tunne Kelam, Vytautas Landsbergis, József Szájer, György Schöpflin, Peter Štastný, Wojciech Roszkowski, Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis, László Tőkés, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, Etelka Barsi-Pataky, Zsolt László Becsey, John Bowis, Mihael Brejč, Jan Březina, Simon Busuttill, Petru Filip, Christofer Fjellner, Kinga Gál, Milan Gaľa, András Gyürk, Gunnar Hökmark, Anna Ibrisagic, Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Anne E. Jensen, Aldis Kušķis, Marianne Mikko, Nickolay Mladenov, Péter Olajos, Jan Olbrycht, Csaba Óry, Alojz Peterle, Rihards Pīks, Zita Pleštinšská, Zuzana Roithová, Katrin Saks, Toomas Savi, Agnes Schierhuber, Struan Stevenson, László Surján, Ari Vatanen, Zbigniew Zaleski and Tadeusz Zwiefka* to the Commission on 9 December 2008.

Debate

Situation of the Gypsy-Roma

Estimates suggest that Romania has several million Gypsy citizens, and instead of there being a responsible social and minority policy addressing their intolerable situation, the world tends to hear about their fate through the sensationalist media.

We witnessed this in connection with the criminal acts committed by Romanian Gypsies in Italy.

It is regrettable and distressing that it is only the shocking events in Italy that have managed to reach the European Parliament's social response threshold.

It is even sadder that some political forces are treating these events as interference in Italy's domestic affairs and are trying to make political capital out of the Gypsy issue.

We must, on the other hand, oppose the use of anti-Romanian Gypsy sentiment among the public by some political forces to foment anti-Romanian feeling in general.

In the first place, the situation that has evolved in Italy is not an Italian domestic matter, and neither is it merely an issue relating to Romanian Gypsies.

It is an issue concerning all Gypsy people living within the European Union, and one that demands and warrants more than just case-by-case or symptomatic treatment.

Strasbourg, 20 May 2008

László Tőkés

Minority Intergroup of the European Parliament Proposals

The Minority Intergroup of the European Parliament, on its session on 28 January, commemorated the 10th anniversary of the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages. The participants at the session considered it to be "the shame of Europe" that several members states still hesitate to sign the Charter, and others, even though accept it, do not implement it. **Slovakia**, for instance, belongs to this group. Furthermore, certain countries in the Balkans, in addition to not recognizing the rights to the use of mother tongue, they even deny the mere existence of some minorities living on their territory. This is the case of the Macedonian community living in **Greece** and **Bulgaria**, the group of the Hungarian Csango living in **Romania**, as well as the Romanians in **Serbia**.

It is more than ever unsettling, that the churches of these national minorities do not support and protect these groups in their oppression and disrespect for their minority rights. In Slovakia, it is a new development that, instead of supporting the need and request of the half a million Hungarian Catholics for a Hungarian bishop – a request they have expressed for many years now – the newly introduced division of church districts recently spread the Hungarian Catholic community formerly belonging to two districts into four districts.

Above all, as MEP Tabajdi Csaba, president of the Intergroup stated, even **Europe** remains silent when it comes to dealing with these issues.

Keeping in mind the above, with all due respect I put forward the following:

1. The Minority Intergroup can not remain silent concerning the issue of the violation of national and religious minorities. Therefore: (a) it should categorically speak against all forms of ethnic genocide; (b) initiate the sending of investigative committees of the EP to the above mentioned countries, and to those communities in danger; (c) succeed in putting these issues on the agenda of the **European Parliament**.
2. The Minority Intergroup should get directly in touch with the **representatives of the churches** in the above mentioned national and religious communities in danger, and they should request their support for these communities, in the spirit of religious diversity, tolerance and Christian and ecumenical values.

The Minority Intergroup should in particular ask for the support of the **Conference of Hungarian Bishops** for the Hungarian community in the Carpathian Basin, for the Hungarian Catholics living in Slovakia and the Csángó community in Romania.

Strasbourg, 21 February 2008

László Tőkés

"Although equality of chance, subsidiarity and self-government are fundamental principles for the European structure, and every eighth European Citizen belongs to an ethnic minority, the contracts and documents which control the functioning of the European Union are still not clear enough about the particular rights of national minority communities and the individuals who belong to these groups."

Communiqué on Minorities in the Ukraine

The traditional Hungarian-Romanian opposition remarkably turned into an act of solidarity between the Hungarian and Romanian minorities residing in the Ukraine, who at this time are both subject to discrimination as the result of the detrimental decree brought by the Ukrainian Government.

In the regions of Cernauti and Odessa, as well as Subcarpathia, the leaders of the substantial Romanian minority turned to their mother-country, i.e. Romania, with a particular demand concerning the "catastrophic situation and conditions" of the Romanian education in the Ukraine. "Save the Romanians in the Ukraine!" was their cry for help entitled. The open letter compiled by the Romanian Community in the Ukraine informs us how the process of transforming the non-Ukrainians into Ukrainians and depriving the minorities of their rights is gaining headway with "Stakhanovist intensity". The official statements made by the Hungarian Cultural Alliance in Subcarpathia and of the Reformed Church are similarly dramatic. "The Hungarians in the Ukraine, the Hungarian churches and organizations should join forces against the discriminatory measures taken, which ultimately would lead to the **assimilation** of all national minorities" stated Bishop **Sándor Fábrián Zán** in his communiqué of wide appeal.

The official educational politics represented by the Ukrainian government is biased against minorities and it basically contradicts all democratic human rights and European standards on national minorities. Furthermore, it cynically neglects, among other basic political documents, the European Charta of the Regional and Minority Languages, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as the regulations set by the agreement aiming to protect minority rights signed between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1991.

Géza Jeszenszky, Hungary's former Foreign Minister, as well as **József Szájer**, head of the Hungarian delegation to the European People's Party within the European Parliament also spoke for the necessity of protecting the Hungarian community in the Ukraine.

This afternoon MEP László Tőkés urged the Union and the member states for upholding the banner for the

Ukrainian minorities, i.e. rescuing the Romanian and the Hungarian education before the public of the European Parliament.

Strasbourg, 7 July 2008

One minute speech

on protection of minority language education

In May this year, the leaders of the Romanian Community in the Ukraine turned to the Romanian Head of State in an open letter, as well as an independent communiqué. In these they raised their voice against the discriminatory Ukrainian educational politics aiming to entirely discontinue the education in the **Romanian** language and the aggressive assimilation of the Romanian communities.

In the Subcarpathian Region of the Ukraine, the **Hungarian** community must face the very same discriminatory and anti-minority politics. Decree Nr. 461/2008 brought by the Department on Education schedules the education in minority languages to be converted into the official language of the state, i.e. the Ukrainian, as well as the entire educational system be converted according to the Ukrainian model.

The European Parliament and the member states of the Union, including Romania and Hungary too, should condemn the attempts represented by the **Ukraine** aiming to methodically assimilate all national minorities. In the same time they should request from the Ukraine to fulfill its international responsibilities concerning human and minority rights, and unconditionally accomplish all standards set in the European Charta for Regional and Minority Languages.

Europe should make a stand for safeguarding the Ukrainian national minorities, who have been deprived of their rights, thus have become jeopardized.

Debate

Culture in a globalizing world – the situation of Szeklers and Csángós

In this European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, we must emphasize the special significance of culture in reinforcing European identity. As an ethnic Hungarian from Romania, I would like to draw Member States' attention to supporting Europe's minority and endangered cultures. Examples of these include the ancient cultures of the ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, the Moldavian Csángós, the Szekler people of Transylvania, as well as those of the Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria, the ethnic Serbs in Romania and the Basque people in Spain. The recommendation adopted by the Council of Europe on the basis of a report on the Csángó people by the Finnish MP Tytti Isohookana-Asunmaa is a concept that could be emulated, as its objective is to preserve the Csángó culture, which is on the point of extinction. In the context of the European Union's foreign relations, we must also pay heed to Tibet, under occupation by the Chinese communist dictatorship and where, as the Dalai Lama has put it, cultural genocide has been unleashed on one of the world's most ancient cultures.

12 March 2008

László Tőkés

Romanian “language law”

One-minute speech on matters of political importance



Csángó children in traditional wear

In this European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, I would like to draw your attention to an extremely discriminatory draft law by the Romanian Conservative Party which, if adopted, would penalize people who belong to ethnic minorities and who do not speak the state language of Romania with loss of their nationality. This language law is primarily aimed at the Hungarian community in their ancient homeland of Transylvania. Up to now, not a single Romanian parliamentary party has opposed it, and the National Council for Combating Discrimination has even given it the green light. At the same time, the Romanian parliament is preparing to adopt another discriminatory law, the Education Act. We will be contacting Leonard Orban, the Romanian Commissioner responsible for multilingualism in the European Commission, about these issues very soon, because we are convinced that Romania must follow the democratic practice of the European Parliament with regard to its language laws.

László Tőkés
30 January 2008

The Csángós are a non-homogeneous group of Roman Catholic people of Hungarian origin. This ethnic group is a relic from the Middle Ages that has survived in Moldavia, in the eastern part of the Romanian Carpathians.

Restriction of freedom of speech in an EU Member State: Slovakia

Priority Written Question to the European Commission

On 30 September 2008 I participated in a conference in Dunaszerdahely, in Southern Slovakia. During my visit I had an informal meeting with **Pál Csáky**, Chairman of the Party of Hungarian Coalition (MKP-SMK) in order to discuss issues concerning the Hungarian minority living in the neighbouring countries of Hungary, and to elaborate possibilities of closer cooperation. We also mentioned the various forms of autonomy existing in the EU that best protect minorities in Europe as an added value of our diverse and multicultural Union.

Following this meeting the politicians of the ruling coalition in Slovakia have been constantly attacking the Chairman of MKP-SMK in an extremely nationalistic way, thus intimidating the entire Hungarian community living in Slovakia. According to Prime Minister Robert Fico the simple mentioning of the

term **autonomy**, while Slovakia is part of the Schengen area, is a sign of provocation. According to him the Hungarian-Slovak relations are endangered by the Chairman of MKP-SMK. This declaration comes at a time when hate speeches of one of the ruling parties against the Hungarian minority occur on a daily basis. How is it possible and tolerated in today's European Union that a meeting of a **Member of the European Parliament** of an EU member state and a **Member of Parliament** of another EU member state, both representatives of the same minority in the two countries, focusing on any topic in full respect of the law, is subject to such restrictive scrutiny and intolerance, leading to discrimination and injustice against the principles of dignity, justice, and equality of the EU? Isn't this against the principle of non-discrimination in all its forms?

Similarly, being fully aware that language related issues of a member state are of national competence and the European Commission has no general powers to intervene under the Treaty establishing the European Community and the Treaty of the European Union, how is it possible to tolerate that one member state seriously restricts the use and teaching of a minority language of a community living on its territory, thus allowing the development of nationalistic attitudes towards minorities? What are the means and instruments the **European Commission** can use to address the current situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and the nationalistic trends directed against the promotion and protection of a minority language and culture in an EU member state?

László Tőkés
13 October 2008

European Free Alliance in Transylvania: More Autonomy for Transylvania is the ONLY way



With Nelly Maes, EFA President, and Ian Hudghton, President of the Scottish National Party

The European Free Alliance Parliamentary Group from the European Parliament visited Transylvania between 2-4 July 2008, at the invitation of fellow MEP László Tőkés. The four day visit included a conference at the Palace of Culture in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş) and a visit to the Szekler Land. The main themes discussed included:

- Regionalism, Devolution and Autonomy in Europe
- Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of Regions
- Szeklers and Csángós: Self-government and Survival

Commenting, Scottish MEP and

President of the EFA Group **Ian Hudghton** said: "I want to thank our host Bishop Tőkés for organizing an excellent and highly informative visit to Transylvania. We have been able to learn a great deal and share valuable experiences. Laszlo Tokes does a great job representing the interests of the people of Transylvania in the European Union and I wish him well in his work."

President of the EFA Political Party **Nelly Maes** said: "My thanks to László Tőkés for the invitation to come here and for organizing this visit which is a result of a friendship that goes back nearly twenty years. During our visit we have learnt

about many specific problems and our conclusion is that developing greater autonomy will further help not only to find solutions but to help Transylvania's integration in the European Union."

László Tőkés MEP said: "I thank my colleagues from the European Free Alliance for coming to Transylvania and sharing the past few days with us. We have had the opportunity to share experiences and it is important for us to feel part of the EFA family. Transylvania's future lies in Europe, and it is important that we now move forward to stronger and better links between our region and an integrated European Union."

One minute speech regarding the situation in T I B E T

Hardly did the protests generated around the declaration of Kosovo's independence settle, the world is attentive, at the very threshold of the preparations for the Peking Olympics, to the resistance of Tibet which had suffered bloody subjugation. The violent colonialist policy of nationalist-communist police states led to the bloodshed in both cases. Denying the right of self-determination of peoples caused the crisis threatening the world peace in both cases. The Nobel Peace Prize winner Dalai Lama revealed the cultural genocide and demographic aggression against Tibetans. These are well-known methods in the formerly communist Romania too. Ceauşescu regarded the oppression of minorities belonging solely to the country's "home affairs", just as China does now in the case of Tibet. The European Parliament should also take firm steps alongside with Pope Benedict XVI against "injustice, hatred and violence". The European Parliament should come out in support of Tibet's territorial autonomy. We look very much forward that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI will tell the world from the European Parliament that: there is no peace without truth.

9 April 2008

László Tőkés

Letter

To His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Your Holiness,

I have been closely watching this year your efforts for dialogue with China to obtain autonomy for the Tibetan people. And I am concerned to see that Chinese authorities neglect the freedom aspiration of Tibetans and continue to oppress your people. I sent a letter of solidarity to you after the shocking events of March in Lhasa and other cities, with the hope that the international **pressure** on China as host country for the 2008 **Olympic Games** would provide China with a historic opportunity to change its policy towards Tibet, and grant fundamental rights for your people.

On 15 July, I was particularly impressed by a photo exhibition on behalf of the Polish Delegation to the European People's Party – European Democrats in the European Parliament, entitled '**TIBET: Journey on the Olympic Route and Way Forward**'. Photographer Anna Posluszna introduced us to the enchanting beauty of ancient Tibet and to the upsetting tragedy of the present-day Tibet. I decided on the spot to invite the exhibition to my homeland, **Transylvania**.

You might know that Transylvania is the 'Tibet' of **Romania**. Transylvanian Hungarians, the people of **Alexander Csoma de Kőrös**, the founder of Tibetan

Studies and author of the first ever Tibetan-English dictionary, well understand your terms of *cultural genocide* and *demographic aggression* from own experiences. We were though given the blessing to experience the strength and power of **peaceful resistance**, in **1989**, when the courage in faith of my small Christian congregation in Temesvár/Timisoara led to the anti-communist revolution in Romania.

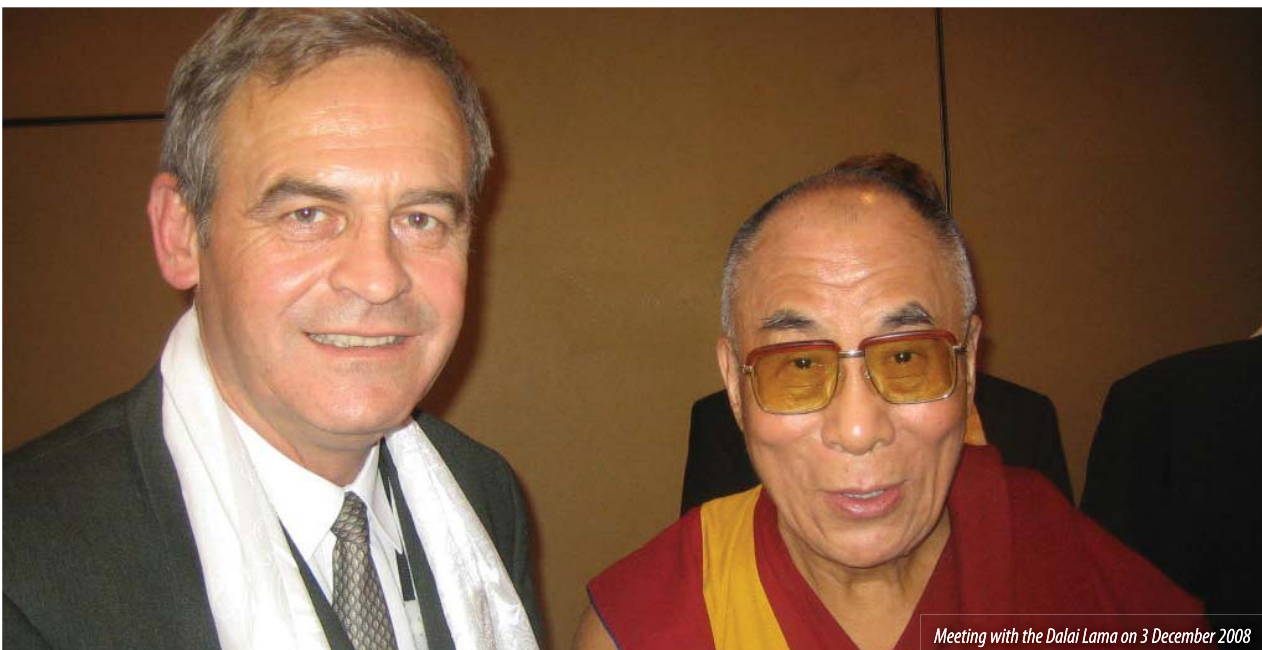
I have asked for membership to the **Tibet Intergroup** of the European Parliament to directly be able to support the case of your people.

I would like to grab this opportunity to **invite you to Transylvania**. The opening of the Tibet photo exhibition might provide a good opportunity to welcome you in my city of residence, Nagyvárad/Oradea. I would also be happy to introduce you to the small village of Csomakőrös in the Szekler Land area, where Alexander Csoma de Kőrös was born 225 years ago, and to his College at Nagyenyed/Aiud with a great past.

Truly yours,

3 December 2008

MEP László Tőkés,
Bishop of the Reformed Church in Romania



Meeting with the Dalai Lama on 3 December 2008

Sakharov human rights prize awarded to China's Hu Jia

On 17 December 2008 at noon, within a ceremonial festivity in the European Parliament, Mr. Hu Jia, Chinese human rights activist was awarded with the Sakharov Prize. He was awarded "symbolically" since the emblematic human rights fighter could not be present, because he languishes in a Chinese prison in the present moment.

Not long after the occasion held in the European Parliament, right next to the main building a demonstration on the part of several Non-Governmental Organizations took place entitled "Rally for Freedom and Human Rights in China". At the organizers' request László Tőkés, Transylvanian MEP of the European Free Alliance also raised his voices in the line of human rights and civil rights activists.

Religious Freedom in Romania?

Ecumenical Fellowship of Minority Churches in Romania

Visit to the European Parliament, Brussels, 23-26 June 2008

There has been no overall improvement of religious freedom in our country since the last visit to the European Parliament of an ecumenical delegation from Romania as of **17-18 October 2005**. We would like to draw attention that following the 50 years period of institutional persecution of churches during atheist communism, religious freedom is still facing neuralgic problems despite Romania's EU membership since 1 January 2007.

Law on Religions

The Parliament passed a new Law on Religions in December 2006 that took effect in January 2007. We criticised the law, arguing that it would institutionalize discrimination against religious minorities. The Constitution of Romania grants full religious freedom, the state is not neutral and unjustly favours the majority church.

Church Property Restitution

In 2005 the Government amended the property restitution legislation, including law 501/2002, which provides for the restitution of religious property. Although some progress was made, the pace of restitution was extremely slow, and the large majority of religious property restitution cases remained unresolved. We emphasise that our churches presented re-claims for almost 10,000 estates, which are necessary for our religious, charity, educational and social activities. Even decisions for property restitution are obstructed by the local governments. This is how the proportion of restituted property for minority churches still remains less than 30% (this figure is only about 5% in the case of the Greek Catholic Church). Slow pace of reform in the justice system directly affect religious freedom. Most notably have been registered the refusal to execute final judicial verdicts establishing property rights of minority churches (mostly the Greek-Catholic Church); the refusal to implement or obey the law or

government's decisions referring to the restitution of goods; cases when Romanian judges deny their competence; acceptance of legality of selling of goods that should be restituted; bad will in interpretation and the abusive interpretation of legal provisions, ending in breaking the rule of law (i.e. to reconstitute the confiscated property according to the percentage of believers and not based on legal rights).

Denominational Education

In many case the Romanian State does not respect the right to moral and religious education in accordance with religious affiliation of the legal tutors. The pupils who belong to minority religions do not benefit in many cases of equal access to religious education as the majority, in public schools, situation that creates conditions for abuses. The Bill on Education does not accordingly support denominational education, despite Romania's Constitution already enhanced the justification of denominational education *"Education on every virtual scale is granted in governmental, private and denominational institutions on terms determined by the law"*. (Paragraph 32, Art. 5). Considering that the parents of the pupils and students attending denominational institutions of education are tax-paying citizens in Romania, we emphatically demand that the law assures all three forms of subsidy – explicitly the fundamental, supplementary and compensational subsidies – as it does in case of state institutions of education.

Subsidies of Churches in Romania

Our churches also ask for religious charities (health institutions, orphanages, homes for elderly, etc.) to be financed by the state (normative subsidy) in the same way as similar public institutions. By government decrees, the majority Orthodox Church receives immense allocation and considerable estate property. In the lack of regulations by the law the issue of state subsidization of church activity will

only increase tensions between churches.

EU and Churches

With full support dedicated to MEP László Tőkés' mission to strengthen Christian spirituality and identity in Europe through his programme entitled "Christian Europe", and in order to share from the financial resources offered by the European Union, we will support a motion for an amendment of MEP Tőkés to the current relevant laws so that all European Churches may directly participate in the competition for EU Funds.

Coping with the Communist Past

It is essential for the inner functioning of churches and confirmation of their social genuineness to face and cope with their relation to the communist regime. Clerical servants should be thoroughly investigated. Thus a complete renewal could take place. Going public with the report compiled by Tismăneanu committee, established by President Traian Băsescu's initiative, serves the cause of the above mentioned revitalization. The chapter from this report on minorities and churches should be extended by involving more experts representing both sides. The European Union's authorities and professional institutions are required to grant their support concerning this issue.

EU Constitution

Romanian Churches demand and sustain the presence of Christian values and traditions within the Constitution of the European Union serving as a bridge of continuity between historical customs and modern age, as well as an underlying guarantee for Christian ethics.

Tolerance and mutual respect

While the European Union have decided 2008 to be the year of inter-cultural dialogue, many actions undertaken by the majority Orthodox Church contravene these principles and are not sanctioned

by the state: hate speech permitted on state television, destruction of properties that are to be restituted, discrimination in public schools, state media etc. against minority churches. The European Year for Intercultural Dialogue is a good opportunity and framework for the citizens of Romania, the various nationalities and churches

of Transylvania to approach towards each other; especially that throughout history, Transylvania has been a champion of cultural tolerance. In 1568 for instance religious freedom was ordered by the parliament at Turda/Torda. Signed by representatives of churches invited by **MEP László TÖKÉS**:

István CSÚRY, Acting Bishop, Reformed Church District, Királyhágómellék District, **Nicolae ANUSCA**, First Councillor, Greek-Catholic Archbishopric, Romania, **Dénes MÁTHÉ**, First Elder, Unitarian Church of Transylvania, **Gyula KOVÁCS**, Vice-President, Hungarian Baptist Alliance, Romania.

Letter on ethnic and religious discrimination

10 October 2008

European Commission
Directorate-General for Justice,
Freedom and Security
To Commissioner **Jacques Barrot**

Dear Commissioner,

The undersigned – László Tökés, Member of the European Parliament and Bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District, residing at 1 Calvin Street, Oradea, Bihor County, Romania – intends to inform you about **legal abuses exerted by the Court of Satu Mare County, Romania, involving religious, ethnic and political connotations.**

All these started with an **infringement** of former Reformed pastor of the Ghenci Reformed Parish, located in Satu Mare County. Luliu Bátori carried into effect high misdemeanours implying felonies of fraudulent nature and embezzlement, thus he contributed to the creation of a detriment amounting to 24.900 \$ and another sum of 6.943 \$ as ensuing interest. As the Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District was informed about the offence, the **Church's Discipline Committee suspended** the aforementioned of his position in accordance with the Canons of the Church (Main Section, Disciplinary Statutes, point e, article 60 of chapter XIII). The sanctioned however did not respect the official decree of his suspension, but he continued his activity and did not remedy the financial damage. In response, the Királyhágómellék Reformed Church



Anti-terrorists dispatched against peaceful congregation members

District's Discipline Committee **revoked the license as pastor** of the aforementioned on 3 August 2007. This decision was validated by the Synod's Discipline Committee, and due to the Canons of the Reformed Church in Romania thus the decision became definitive. Nevertheless, Luliu Bátori did not accept his sanction and turned to the **Court of Satu Mare County** which through Decree 665/D/2007 **nullified** the legal and just verdict of the Church Discipline Committee. No wonder that Luliu Bátori felt encouraged starting dozens of additional legal proceedings against the Reformed Church. BUT, this decree **contradicted Law No 489/2006** on the Freedom of Religion and the General Status of Denominations, as Article 26, Paragraph 2, concerning religious freedom and internal affairs of

churches, states: "Internal discipline matters are subject to bylaws and canonic regulations exclusively". Furthermore, the Court of Satu Mare **neglected the Constitution of Romania** which affirms: "All religions shall be free and organized in accordance with their own statutes, under the terms laid down by law" (Article 29, Paragraph 3) and that "Religious cults shall be autonomous from the State and shall enjoy support from it..." (Article 29, Paragraph 5). At that point, the Church turned to the **Romanian Constitutional Court**. Their Decree No. 797, dating 3 July 2008 **confirmed** that "official authorities are beyond the competence to bring justice to internal affairs of churches and cases pertaining to inner discipline, since in this case constitutional law does not regulate legal responsibility,

but the inner laws of churches". It also stated that "it is equitable that the disciplinary responsibility of the cleric personnel should be determined by the competent religious committee. They are qualified to judge whether the disciplinary offences can be reconciled with the spiritual role embodied by the church itself". Despite the decision of the Constitutional Court, the mechanism of the administration of justice still goes on at the expense of the Reformed Church: at the proceedings held at the Court of Satu Mare on 4 September 2008, the judge, stated that (s)he would not take into consideration the order of the Romanian Constitutional Court. By doing so (s)he **violated the regulations determined in the civil procedure** (Article 27, Paragraph 7).

In addition, the bailiff summoned the Reformed Church of Ghenci about the **sale by auction** of the parish house in their property to compensate the former pastor despite the court decisions which assessed amends to the former pastor were illegal, since they contradict the aforementioned decree of the Constitutional Court. Further, there has been a **police procedure in motion against Iuliu Bátori** based on the very same charges of defalcation, but investigations have not been closed for more than a year. In this context it was rather bizarre that **excessive armed forces** (between 50-100 policemen and antiterrorist squad members) protected Bátori every time he attempted to move back to the parish house due to the illegal decision of the Court of Satu Mare. The criminal investigation of those felonies committed by the former pastor will seemingly drag on for infinity in spite of that Bátori's guilt is proved by unambiguous written facts.

The actions taken by the judicial power, the government and the armed forces severely harm the inner autonomy and freedom of our church and undermine the principle of denominational freedom.



Congregation blocked to enter church property

Taking into consideration all these **signs of corruption** the following **conclusions** can be inferred:

- The actions taken by the judicial power, the government and the armed forces severely harm the inner autonomy and freedom of our church and undermine the principle of denominational freedom.
- They are instances for ethnic and religious discrimination.
- They are invalid interventions of politics into matters of jurisdiction, which question the separation

of powers within the state.

- The Romanian judicial reform should not be constantly delayed.

Weakening the **Hungarian community** and damaging the structures of the **Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania** was a priority for communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. The legal predicaments presented hereby mirror the endeavours of the former nationalist-communist regime still carried on by current Romanian political forces. (Not even Ceausescu would have

though committed such a grave infringement of lawful rights as calling an auction for properties

in the possession of the Church.) These are **obvious abuses against religious freedom** and **clear offences against the Hungarian community in Romania**. The Reformed Church otherwise objected each time when peaceful Hungarian church members were threatened and intimidated by unjustified actions of the police and masked anti-terrorist units, and state authorities were pertaining to the administration of justice.

Dear Mr Commissioner,

The existing state of affairs, which is not a unique occurrence in Romania, presses the intervention of competent European institutions. We appeal to you, Mr Commissioner, with our request for you to intercede so this case would be solved in conformity with European standards. The described case undesirably cast a negative light upon the judicial system and ethnic-political affairs of one of the member states of the European Union.

May the EU enforce its own laws and regulations upon this case, it will mean an obvious demonstration of the effectiveness and good organization of the European institutions.

Yours faithfully,

László Tőkés

Protest against Romanian ultranationalist manifestations

Our Transylvanian Hungarian community was profoundly astonished when learning about the anti-Hungarian demonstration of fascist character held at Cluj/Kolozsvár on the national holiday of all Hungarians, on **15 March**. Several Romanian ultranationalist manifestations preceded our holiday countrywide. The anti-Hungarian hate-meeting organized by the **New Right Wing** legionary organization as well as by the **Sarmisegetuza Foundation**, and particularly the brutal atrocity committed against **Lehel Lészai**, a Hungarian high school student, remind us to a great extent of the blood-spattered anti-Hungarian events that had taken place in Marosvásárhely/Targu Mures in March 1990. It is worthy that our Transylvanian Hungarian community **protests** against the provocations and atrocities which are connected in their openly anti-Hungarian nature.

Furthermore, they were designed to desecrate our national holiday in order to hurt our dignity.

In consequence, for this strait those leading Romanian politicians are **responsible** who will not take into consideration the European spirituality and democratic principles. They only keep on generating the anti-Hungarian feelings in Romania turning to unambiguous methods, such as open political instigation and fascist law initiatives.

The following circumstances mean **serious grievance** against democratic liberty, human and national dignity, as well as individual and community rights: Mayor Emil Boc – President of the Liberal Democratic Party – authorized the Cluj xenophobic-legionary demonstration; then the head of the protocol department of the Mayor's Office was one of the leading speakers at the extremist anti-

Hungarian demonstration; a student of the Apáczai Csere János High School was beaten up till he lost his consciousness. The physical assault took place in front of a police station in full daylight. On the one hand, the tacit **complicity** of the civilian authorities, on the other hand, the **passivity** of the authorities in charge of maintenance of public order led to putting into practice the **lynching** atmosphere propagated at the anti-Hungarian demonstration: an innocent Hungarian student was cruelly beaten up for his identity. I hereby wish to express my deepest **solidarity** with Lehel Lészai and his family.

I am expressing my protest against these events and turning for proper remedy to President **Traian Băsescu** as well as the **European Parliament**.

17 March 2008

László Tókécs

On anti-Hungarian assaults

In recent years Hungarians have been beaten up in the streets of Slovakia, Serbia and Romania, simply because they have been speaking in their native language – Hungarian. This very weekend aggression has been renewed and blood spilt in Kolozsvár (Cluj), in Transylvania. The victims were journalists, who were attacked from behind on the street at night by three young Romanians and brutally beaten. They were jeered at and insulted, called filthy foreigners and told to go back home where they belonged. In a similar incident on Saturday, another Hungarian was knifed in the main square in Szabadka (Subotica), in the Vojvodina in Serbia. This is the place where, on 15 March 2008 – Hungarian Revolution Day – there was an anti-Hungarian demonstration, organized by a neo-fascist Romanian group, the New Right, in Kolozsvár (Cluj), where, the same day, a young Hungarian was assaulted. It is a matter of urgency that we join forces with our Romanian sisters and brothers to suppress aggressive nationalism. We look forward to legislation being adopted by the Romanian authorities and the aggressors being punished in an exemplary way.

Strasbourg, 21 April 2008

Against violence and cruelty

'I desire mercy and not sacrifice': the words of Jesus echo in our souls when we encounter rampant violence and cruelty in the world. Terror and force are even more painful when committed in the name of fundamentalist religiosity or religious exclusivism.

That is why we must protest against the brutal execution of the 13-year-old South Somalian girl, who after having been raped by three men, was stoned to death upon the verdict of an Islamic court. And we must protest against the persecution of Iraq's Christian minority, who have been forced to flee their homes in Mosul and its surrounding region in the thousands by militant Shiites.

In the spirit of our European Christian tradition, religious tolerance and ecumenical brotherhood, the European Union should raise its voice and take action to protect the victims of religious violence and persecution.

Tókécs László

Strasbourg, 17 November 2008

Open letter

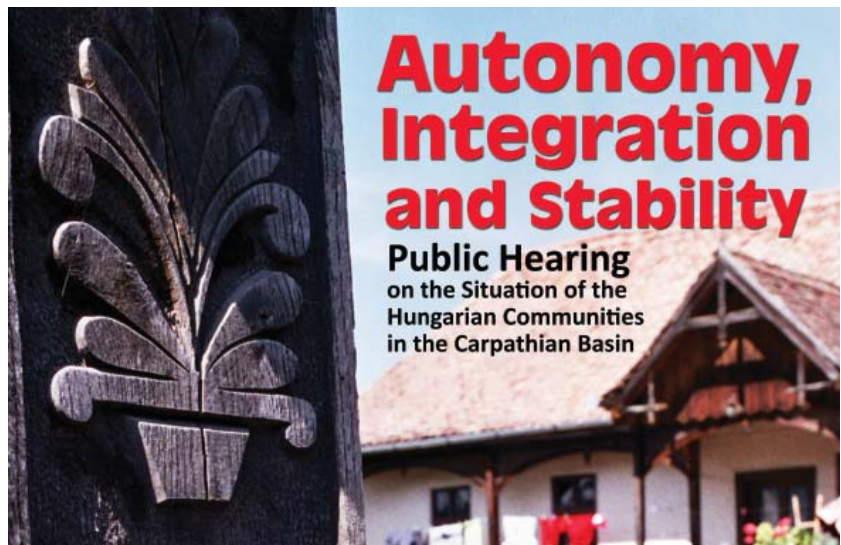
to NATO Member States on the occasion of their Bucharest Summit

I hereby turn to you on behalf of the **Hungarian Autonomy Council of the Carpathian Basin** which includes the most important political advocacy organizations of the Hungarian minorities in Hungary's neighbouring countries, as follow: the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, the Hungarian Civic Party, the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, the Szekler National Council – of **Romania**; the Hungarian Coalition Party – of **Slovakia**; the Hungarian Union of Vojvodina, the Hungarian Democratic Party of Vojvodina and the Democratic Hungarian Community of Vojvodina – of **Serbia**; the Hungarian Cultural Union of Transcarpathia – in the **Ukraine**; and the Hungarian Democratic Community – of **Croatia**.

I approach you based on the fact that throughout the past close to twenty years of the post-communist transition period, the aforementioned organizations have in a devoted and consistent manner stood up for the protection of euro-atlantic values, thus proactively supporting the euro-atlantic integration efforts of our countries. The stability and security of East-Central-Europe and the Balkans remain of a fundamental interest to us. We encourage the development of cooperative, normal and healthy relations with the majority societies, for the sustainability and growth of our communities.

As you are aware, in these regions the borders of different nations and states do not meet, due to the geopolitical changes of the 20th century. As a consequence, the efforts of national minorities aimed at protecting their collective identities have in the past hundred years run into the homogenous nation-state building politics of the majority communities. Neither NATO, nor the European Union has found a soothing remedy to this situation so far.

The latest example is the settling of the status of Kosovo, where the wilsonian principle of self-determination ran into another



principle of international law referring to the territorial integrity of states. We know that the case of Kosovo can not be regarded as a possible precedent. We are aware that in the euro-atlantic area, the enlargement of which you have been working on, the differing interests need to be met on the lines of common values. This is why we consider the minority-related provisions of the **Ahtisaari Plan** supported by a majority of member states of high relevance. These provisions see the normalization of the majority-minority relations possible only through granting national minorities with collective rights and the three-level constitutional autonomy of the Serbian community of Kosovo.

The right to self-determination of peoples and the inviolability of the territorial integrity of states are equally important principles. Responsible application of the principle of self-determination in our region means searching for appropriate solutions on the lines of common values – based on political realities – to the growth of our nations and national communities. The native Hungarian communities which became ethnic minorities as a consequence of the peace treaties of the two world wars of the past century, yet striving to carry on in their homeland, see this possible exclusively in **the constitutional and legal system**

of collective autonomies on three levels – cultural autonomy, local administrative autonomy of special status, territorial-regional autonomy – which are based on **internal self-determination** and which grant the **integrity of state borders**. Similarly, we believe that collective **autonomies built with peaceful and democratic means can be important pillars of the region's stability** – but **their absence or impediment can bring serious security threats**, as we have witnessed in the case of Kosovo.

I therefore approach all participants of the upcoming NATO summit with the request to analyse the aforementioned ideas from the perspective of security policy in the euro-atlantic region and its neighbouring countries, and to consider solutions based on the principle of internal self-determination of minority communities. Similarly, I ask you to politically support with the means of preventive diplomacy the peaceful and democratic autonomy-efforts of minority communities within NATO member states as well as within those joining the Alliance in the future.

27 March 2008

MEP László Tőkés
President of the Hungarian
Autonomy Council of the
Carpathian Basin

Debate

on the future of Europe

The introduction to the Charter of Fundamental Rights attached to the new basic Treaty of the European Union states that the peoples of Europe are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values. Sakharov prize-winner Salih Mahmoud Osman, however, addressing a plenary sitting of the European Parliament last December, said that there will be no peace without justice.

Unjust systems of peace sooner or later lead to war and collapse. The most recent Balkan war and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia are a prime example of this. Reconciliation is almost inconceivable unless a just new order is put in place.

Europe must also come to terms with its communist past. Eliminating the pernicious legacy of communism is a prerequisite for a peaceful future in Europe. Communism deserves to be condemned equally along with fascism. There will be no peace or rule of law, no security or stability on our continent unless legitimate justice is served in every regard. This same justice also applies to resolving the situation of minority ethnic communities.

Strasbourg, 19 February 2008

Debate

on Kosovo's declaration of independence

Kosovo's declaration of independence is making big waves in our region. The Romanian parties that are currently preparing for elections are using the occasion to create anti-Hungarian hysteria. They are all lining up against Hungarians in Transylvania, which is similar in size to Kosovo and has a similar population to the Albanian province.

The 'deep concern' of the Romanian parliament is completely unfounded and unjustified. Romania must not be afraid of the Hungarians. Our national community in Transylvania does respect the Romanian constitution and territorial integrity.

At the same time, however, we have reason to expect that, based on the principle of 'territorial rights', Romania will deal with the situation of our national community in a European way, and ensure the personal autonomy of Hungarians (1) and the regional autonomy of Transylvania and other regions (2) on the basis of the principle of self-governance that applies in the European Union.

In line with Council of Europe Recommendation 1609/2003, based on the Gross report, we admit that autonomous regions largely promote conflict resolution and reinforce the stability of Europe.

At the same time, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that Romania itself may also benefit from the new situation since the autonomy model of the Kosovan Serbs may also provide a solution for the Romanian communities living across the border in Serbia and Ukraine.

Taking all this into account, it would be advisable for Romania not to subordinate its amicable settlement to ethno-political prejudice, but to recognize the independent Kosovo as soon as possible, like most other Member States of the Union.

Strasbourg, 20 February 2008

One-minute speech

on South Ossetia and Abkhazia

In connection with the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Traian Băsescu, the President of Romania, has lashed out violently at the collective rights of minorities since, in his opinion, they would lead to the collapse of some states. The European Community's concerns about the crisis in the Caucasus, the imperialist aggression and menace of Russia, and the dangers facing Ukraine and Moldova are justified. However, over and above any interests of great powers, and despite the endeavors of all separatists, a real, peaceful solution could ensure collective human and national rights, as well as full autonomy. According to Andreas Gross, rapporteur for the Council of Europe, autonomy is the most effective antidote against separatism. President Băsescu should not worry, because the Hungarians in Transylvania do not want to separate from Romania, in the same way as Tibet does not want to separate from China; they are merely striving to achieve their collective rights and autonomy.

Brussels, 1 September 2008

Corruption threatening an environmental catastrophe in Romania

WRITTEN QUESTION to the European Commission

It is our common task to assist Romania and Bulgaria, the two East-Central European countries that recently joined the European Union. Prior to their accession the European institutions formulated proposals to be followed. Fulfilling these proposals on combating corruption and protecting the environment could lead to the impression that Romania is not behind in the process. However, in Romania corruption threatens an environmental catastrophe. If we do not put an end to the imprudent cutting down of forests, which has been going on for 20 years, the justice authorities will keep on neglecting cases of corruption and will not register any progress. Corruption in connection with the restitution of forests confiscated by

the Communist regime, legal and administrative shortages, and the neglect or sabotage of existing legal regulations, have all contributed to the fact that the amount of illegal felling now constitutes a serious threat. This danger is highest in the Szekler Land area (East Transylvania) mostly inhabited by Hungarians. This region is seemingly treated with a 'colonial attitude' by the competent Ministry and authorities.

In the official reports on Romania for 2004-06 the EC and the EP identified concrete tasks for Romania, and the national authorities undertook their implementation. I am certain that the Commission is still consistently monitoring these undertakings. Please inform me about the results of this process. Independent analysts stated that

that the Romanian forest mafia is supported by high officials of state authorities. Therefore, it is essential that an independent commission re-examine the penal files, since all suspects were acquitted of charges during the police investigation and prosecution. I respectfully ask that the European Commission investigate the professional reports regarding the illegal cutting down of forests in Romania, which contain the names of the persons and institutions who are responsible. If corruption is sustaining ongoing illegal felling of forests in the Szekler Land and other regions of Romania, how does the Commission intend to intervene in order to prevent this phenomenon?

László Tőkés
5 December 2008

Deforestation in Romania

Dr. Dezső Garda has been fighting against the deforestation of Romania and, more precisely of that of the Szekler Land area, since 1997. Between 1998-2000 as member of the parliamentary body in charge of evaluating the Romanian wood-felling and conversion of timber, he proved that in Harghita and Covasna Counties the cutting of 4 million cubic meter wood had not been reported, but had been stolen and sold by the wood-mafia.

Romica Tomescu, Minister for Environment had to acknowledge this "missing" quantity in front of the Parliament's plenary session, in 1999 and 2000. The wood mafia caused a major damage in the basis of the Romanian stock of forest and illegally obtained another about 4 million cubic meter quantity of wood. Although the parliamentary body and the governmental investigation committee had exposed the key figures of the forest-swindle the demolishers of the forests were acquitted of charges during police investigation and prosecution. Between 2001 and 2004, Dr. Dezső

Garda continued his battle against the wood-mafia as member of the Commission against Corruption and Abuse initiated by the Romanian Parliament. The Romanian customs and the Environmental Protection Agency also participated in investigations under his command. Their registers located the damages of the deforestation and pinpointed the vandals, in other words, the identity of the mafia members. Despite all evidences, the Romanian police, prosecutors and judicial authorities exempted the criminals and let them go.

Between 2006 and 2008, as member of the parliamentary Commission against Corruption and Abuse, Dr. Garda managed to prove the relationship between the phenomena of deforestation and the returning of the private property. At that time he collaborated with the commission in charge of checking the return of ownership. Referendum No. 398 of 26 February 2008, the contents of which was underlined even by the national central-police station, presented the members of

the wood-mafia and the return of the private property-mafia name by name, as well as all the felonies committed by them. Nevertheless, the public prosecutor's department seems to take no legal action against them.

What does the systematic cutting down imply for the Szekler Land's environment?

From the barren and unplanted mountainsides the soil gets washed down in a rapid rhythm. These mountainsides of steeper angle will probably never become able to be reforested again! This phenomenon is in swift development, which only got worse by the great quantity of rain of the latest years. Consequently, the rain-withholding capacity of the forests will never work again. Implicitly, after a higher storm and larger quantity of rain, there will be great waves formed on the rivers of the region's basins. Similarly, the microclimate-adjusting character of the forests will cease to exist. Even on a local scale the weather gets

▶ more and more extreme. Transporting wood on creeks which is practiced with the negligence of the rules of wood-felling completely ruins the fauna of the region. Predators – such as wolves, lynxes, bears – which still exist in the Szekler Land area, yet they are on the brink of extinction throughout the whole Europe, will lose their territory in a short while. Their number is rapidly

decreasing and their territory constantly faces harmful human intervention. The present vandalism happening in these forests will push the Szekler regions into ecological and economic catastrophes. It is difficult to keep track of the number of houses which were destroyed, of how many got under water, how many people had to be rescued and resettled and how many roads

became impassable. Nowadays it is evident that the perpetrators of these catastrophes are the members of the wood-mafia.

As it was expected the water is causing the greatest damage in those counties, where the theft of wood is of the largest proportion: Bacau, Harghita, Alba and Covasna. The greatest loss befell to the Szekler Land.

Communiqué

The Report on the Protection of the Environment through criminal law of **MEP Hartmut Nassauer** of the EPP-ED Group was on the agenda of the 19-22 May 2008 session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The one-minute speech of MEP László Tőkés on Monday, 19 May was closely related to this issue, as well as to his membership in the Green/EFA Group. It is a clear intention of Transylvanian Hungarian MEP to focus on environment-related issues represented by the Greens, in addition to the autonomy-efforts supported by EFA.

On the same day in the afternoon, Mr. Tőkés paid a visit to MEP **Cohn-Bendit**, the leader of the Greens, who became wildly known as a result of the 1968 student demonstrations in Paris. Throughout their conversation, Mr. Cohn-Bendit inquired about the situation in Romania today. In the area of protection of the environment, they agreed on cooperation within their joint Group.

In his one-minute speech, Mr. Tőkés spoke about the destructive legacy of communism seriously felt also in the field of environment. He paid particular attention to the Verespatak (Rosia-Montana) case of the gold mine project which had grown to be an international scandal, and against which the Hungarian Churches of Transylvania jointly protested in October 2002. The Romanian Orthodox Church acted similarly concerning this well-known case. Greenpeace and the European Alliance of Green Parties also spoke out against the cyanide-based technology of the mining project

MEPLászlóTőkés equally emphasized the illegal logging taking place in Szekler Land and other regions of Romania.

Communism's harmful legacy for the environment

In the eastern central European region we are also having to deal with Communism's harmful legacy for the environment. In no way can this be considered a purely domestic issue; it is a common European problem that affects us all. When the regime change came about, our countries, including Romania, were unprepared as regards environmental protection strategies.

I support the report by Mr Hartmut Nassauer of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats (PPE-DE Group) on protection of the environment through criminal law, and I want to see those who cause serious environmental harm being held liable for it under criminal law by tightening and ensuring compliance with European Union legislation.

Cyanide technology must be banned in Roşia Montană (Verespatak). The destruction of forests in the Szekler Land and other regions of Romania is also harming the environment. The motorway that is under construction in Transylvania could likewise cause serious environmental damage. Construction work on the Bystroye Canal in Ukraine continues. In Bulgaria a new nuclear power station is being built after this Member State was forced to shut down the Kozloduy plant. We should be paying greater attention to these issues.

Strasbourg, 19 May 2008



State Recognition for the Partium Christian University

Partium Christian University (PCU), based in Nagyvárad (Oradea), Romania, is pleased to announce that it has received final accreditation, approved by the national Parliament, following a Senate vote, effective 30 September 2008. Further, the departments of Social Work, Germanic Studies, and Reformed Didactical Theology also received final accreditation.

After almost 50 years, Partium Christian University is the first autonomous, state-acknowledged Hungarian institution of higher education in Romania. We are grateful to God for this historical event and give Him all praise, glory, and honor for His faithfulness to our Hungarian community.

Coinciding with the change of regime in 1989, the Hungarian minority sought to establish its own mother-tongue speaking university. The Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District established the Sulyok István Reformed College (SIRC) in 1990, with the expectation of restoring higher education civil rights, which had been denied for decades.

This final accreditation is marked by the prolonged process of accreditation, which has been pursued from the founding of SIRC and its legal successor, PCU. In 1999, the Pro Universitate Partium Foundation (PUPF) was created to provide a legal framework to mirror the changes and evolution of Romanian law.

The foundation (PUPF) played a significant role in the establishment,

preservation, and expansion of PCU, during the past decade. Our national community owes a great debt of gratitude to the nation of Hungary and its citizens, who supported this endeavor. Their continuous financial support is a testament to their faith in God and love for their fellow Hungarian brothers and sisters exiled to Romania, after the Trianon Treaty of 1920.

We at Partium Christian University express our deepest appreciation, gratitude, and thanks for the sacrifice of so many on our behalf. On this occasion of accreditation, we acknowledge the "noble struggle" of our founders, supporters, teachers, leaders, and students.

This achievement is a testament to the Hungarian government and Parliament. Their continuing financial support is necessary and vital to PCU's future; the education of a new generation of Partium Christian University students. In that spirit, our current goals include:

- Final accreditation other departments.
- Creation of new education departments.
- Establishment of Graduate Program (Master's)
- Extension of the Bologna system.
- Securing new sources of financial funding.
- Development of the physical plant facilities.

Our struggle has benefited an entire generation. Now, we must forge ahead. We stand ready and able. We salute our partners. We thank

everyone, who stood by us, and sacrificed, on our behalf. Today, your seeds of hope have bloomed into beautiful fruit. We thank all of you.

May God's blessings continue,

1 October 2008

László Tőkés
President

Dr. Gizella Horváth
Rector



MEP **Erna Hennicot-Schöppges** (EPP-ED) lectured the students of the Partium Christian University at Nagyvárad (Oradea) about the working mechanisms of the European Union, on 25 April 2008. The previous day, she gave a gala concert at the local Philharmonics with outstanding Romanian singer Ionel Pantea. Both events were organized by MEP László Tőkés in the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.



Central building of the Partium Christian University

One minute speech

on the Millennium of the Roman Catholic Archbishopric of Gyulafehérvár

Saint Stephen, first king of Hungary, established ten bishoprics one thousand years ago, in 1009 Anno Domini. The **Transylvanian Bishopric**, with the centre at Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia) was one of these. This outstanding event of church history meant the joining of the Christianized **Hungary to Europe**. **Gyulafehérvár** (Alba Iulia) was the capital of the independent Transylvanian Principality in the 16th and 17th centuries, and as such, it revokes the European term

of "**Transylvanian Tolerance**", as the Parliament of Transylvania adopted **religious freedom** first in recorded history, in 1958. In 1918, the **Romanian National Assembly of Gyulafehérvár** (Alba Iulia) pronounced in a decision the right of Transylvania's Hungarians and other national communities for **collective self-government**. Romania still owes Europe with the implementation of that decision.

In the spirit of the manifold historic message of Gyulafehérvár (Alba

Iulia), I therefore propose that the European Union marks the **closing day – 29 September 2009** – of the Millennium Festivities of the Roman Catholic Archbishopric of Gyulafehérvár in its international calendar (1). Further, I am initiating that the ancient cathedral and archbishop's palace of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia) to be declared part of the **cultural World Heritage** (2).

László Tőkés
Brussels, 3 December 2008

Debate

about the progress report on the reform of the European schools

Speaking of multilingualism and its importance, let me use this opportunity to raise a serious concern we have in Romania, where the recent initiative of the Ministry of Regional Development to complete the translation of the EU's regional operational program from Romanian into Hungarian met serious attacks from the Romanian Social Democratic Party run by several leaders of the former communist regime. Please note that this is happening in one of the 27 EU Member States in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, at a time when Commissioner Leonard Orban issued a policy document entitled, 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment'. In the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, a debate on the reform

of the European Schools could not be of greater importance, as we live in a multicultural and multilingual Europe, where different cultures and languages coexist. We need to encourage and enable such cultural interaction for successful European integration. Therefore, our European educational system needs to reflect this multicultural characteristic and allow a healthy and easy coexistence. European schools in particular were set up to meet these needs – to provide multicultural and multilingual education while also strengthening European identity. However, in an enlarged EU with greater citizen mobility and more agencies being created in different Member States, it has become a challenge to meet these needs. As the questions in today's debate

underline, there is a great need to focus on reforms, as it has proved to be more and more complex to provide multilingual and flexible education of high quality.

Allow me to stress the fact that only by allowing students to express and practice their own cultural identity and use their own mother tongue throughout their education and formation can we allow them to evolve as true European citizens. If students studying in European Schools are not able first to develop their national identity through the use of their mother tongue and culture, I believe that they will not have a strong basis to build their European identity.

László Tőkés
Brussels, 25 September 2008

Communiqué

September 26 is **European Day of Languages**. Commissioner on Multilingualism, **Leonard Orban** recently published an EU policy document entitled '*Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment*'. MEP **László Tőkés** welcomed the report on 23 September 2008. However he added that the document should focus more on minority and endangered languages and their education. In East

Central Europe today there are many language and multilingualism related problems, like in the case of Slovakia, Romania, Serbia and the Ukraine, where the Hungarian community faces serious mistreatment and even physical violence for using its language. Fighting for language rights constitute an important step in the process of promotion and protection of minority rights. The document speaks about European values, multilingualism and unity in diversity in a euphoric way, while for some communities not only is

it entirely forbidden to use their language, but their sheer identities are not recognized. This is the case of the Csángó-Hungarian community in Romania, a community victim of forced assimilation. MEP Tőkés concluded that Leonard Orban does indeed think in a European way, but he should go further in managing multilingualism and act in concrete terms on a practical level, coming himself from a multilingual region, that of Transylvania in Romania.

Press Office of MEP László Tőkés

The Roots of the Common European Spirit

On 14 October 2008, in the spirit of our Christian heritage in Europe, MEP László Tőkés participated at the event 'The Roots of the Common European Spirit - 30 years after the election of John Paul II, 20 years after his visit to the European Parliament', a conference followed by an exhibition opening. Organized under the auspices of the EPP-ED and the UEN Groups, with the participation of special guests, such as the Primate of Poland, Cardinal **Józef Glemp**, and professor **Tadeusz Pieronek**, the conference successfully reinforced the image of John Paul II as the Pope of dialogue whose mission was to build bridges between people and cultures, as professor **Rocco Buttiglione** emphasized at the conference. The event was a unique opportunity to bring together different peoples of Europe and different MEPs by focusing on our common Christian roots, thus going beyond national borders. The exhibition, opened by President of the European Parliament, Mr **Hans-Gert Pötering**, tracing the Pope's visits to different EU member states throughout his mission made all this possible. Sadly there have been recent attempts at the level of the European Parliament to go against all efforts to strengthen the Christian heritage of Europe. These attempts indicate clear signs of lack of respect and sacrilege to the address of those MEPs that strive to strengthen these fundamental European values. Unfortunately, this is not the first such case, as MEP Tőkés had in the past spoken up in the Strasbourg plenary against verbal attack to the address of Pope Benedict XVI, who defended family values.



His Holiness John Paul II

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in Romania? WRITTEN QUESTION to the European Commission

In Nagypatak in Romania, the Moldovan Csángó (a Hungarian-speaking minority found in Moldova and Romania) Association has since November 2007 been organizing extramural education in Hungarian for the Hungarian Csángó minority there. Two teachers from Hungary are holding the classes, which begin after the State school-day ends, in a building rented by the Association. These language classes are optional, and pupils attend them voluntarily, while the teachers are providing their services as volunteers. The curriculum developed gradually until the recent past, and participation grew. According to communications from the Association, however, a registered organization in Nagypatak is seeking to put an end to the Hungarian-language classes. This organization's activities used to have a low profile, but it is now blackmailing and intimidating pupils attending the classes and

their parents. The State school in Nagypatak and its teachers are not impartial on the issue either: the institution has allowed its premises to be used for a meeting at which attempts were made to dissuade children from attending the Hungarian lessons.

The successive threats have been so effective that the session on 26 February 2008 was attended by only one pupil. Unknown persons have pelted with stones the building where the classes have been held, which is also where the teachers live. This is just one among many attempts to intimidate those who wish to master, study and develop their own language in addition to Romanian. Efforts have been made, and are continuing, to deter children from attending language lessons in their mother tongue who have sacrificed their own free time in the afternoons in order to do something which is not possible in the State

education system: learn Hungarian. Pupils have reported that various teachers at the Romanian school have threatened to punish those who attend the Hungarian classes in the afternoon by giving them bad grades. The above case seriously violates Article 22 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, which lays down that the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. In view of the above, what action will the Commission take with regard to this and similar cases and to prevent similar occurrences in Romania, which acceded to the European Union on 1 January 2007?

László Tőkés
6 March 2008

/Péter Olajos (PPE-DE), Árpád Duka-Zólyomi (PPE-DE), Kinga Gál (PPE-DE) and Csaba Sógor (PPE-DE) were co-signers of this submission./

Communiqué

On the first day of the June plenary of the European Parliament at Strasbourg, **László Tőkés** had a one minute intervention on European values and tolerance towards the Church — in the context of post-communism. MEP Tőkés' intervention was directly connected to the speech of MEP **Magda Kósa Kovács** of May this year, when the Socialist member — former acting vice president of the Hungarian Socialist Party, former state minister of works and former president of the Commission of Human Rights, National Minorities and Church Affairs of the Hungarian Parliament — offended Pope Benedict XVI. Besides others, MEP Kósa Kovács stated that “in the secular Europe, the Church does not put ideological pressure on the state”, and rejected

the critical words of His Holiness regarding the situation of families in Hungary and the legally registered partnership of homosexuals (please find Catholic News Service report enclosed).

Unfortunately, this was not the first instance that the Socialist politician addressed attacks to the Catholic Church. It is most unfortunate, that her infamous anti-church invective of the election campaign for the European Parliament of 2004 could be continued at the Plenary of the European Parliament.

The newest intolerant manifestation of the Socialist member was rejected in a communiqué by MEP **László Surján** (EPP-ED), which was entitled „The Hungarian Socialist Party would oblige the Pope to wear a muzzle”.

As bishop of the Reformed-Calvinist Church, MEP László Tőkés also rejected the attack which recalls the darkest communist anti-church

rhetoric. In the same time, MEP Tőkés commemorated the 50th anniversary of the execution of martyr prime-minister Imre Nagy, and at the 60th anniversary imprisoning of Cardinal József Mindszenty.

At this very session, MEP **József Szájer**, Head of the Hungarian Delegation to the European Peoples' Party recalled the memory of Premier Imre Nagy and other martyrs of communist dictatorship in a festive speech.

In the end, **Martin Schulz**, head of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament was given the floor. He was defending MEP Magda Kósa Kovács emphasizing her “European merits”.

Please find enclosed English translation of the referred speech of MEP Tőkés.

Press Office of MEP László Tőkés
17 June 2008

One minute speech on European values and tolerance vis-à-vis the Church

At the occasion of the *ad limina* visit of Hungarian Catholic Bishops to Rome, in May 2008, Pope Benedict XVI stated that the long decades of Communist dictatorship left a lasting, grim heritage.

The idea expressed by the His Holiness comes at a most appropriate time at the 50th anniversary of the execution of martyr prime-minister **Imre Nagy**, and at the 60th anniversary of the beginning of the brutal church persecution and the imprisoning of Cardinal **József Mindszenty**.

Our post-communist colleague here at the European Parliament and former state minister, Mrs. Magda Kósa Kovács, in her one-minute speech at the Strasbourg plenary reproduced the militant anti-church age which went hand in hand with the brutal violence of authorities. MEP Magda Kósa Kovács was ambitious “to defend secular Europe and the European values”, including “the legally registered partnership of homosexuals” from Pope Benedict XVI and from the Catholic Church.

A couple of years ago, Mrs Kósa, former party leader, attacked the Vatican, lead then by **Pope John Paul II**, saying that the Holy See “wants to steal Europe as it is, and wants to swallow it at an incredible speed and aggressively”. Keeping in mind the fact that Christian Churches are the genuine representatives of European values stemming from Christian-Democratic values — I firmly reject, as a Reformed bishop, all expressions of anti-church attitudes and intolerance at the European Parliament. At the same time, allow me to suggest, again, the invitation for this year of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the European Parliament.



Fortress churches are typical in Transylvania

“The Word became flesh ..” (John 1:14)

Several elements of European identity can be traced back to Christian roots and values. Without these, European individuality and identity are threatened not only by poverty — but an overall emptiness. However, a political atmosphere was created in Europe, where Christian convictions meet with strong opposition. In the present situation the inclusion of Christian values or the name of God in the Constitution of the European Union seems to be an unattainable objective. This alarming situation can be altered only through joining of forces and collective effort on the part of European churches.

Keeping all this in mind, Bishop László Tőkés, Member of the European Parliament launched an all-embracing program entitled “For a Christian Europe” in order to assert religious and cultural values. The European Bible Exhibition and the ecumenical conference entitled ‘Christianity and Europe’ on 9 and 10 December 2008, in the European Parliament at Brussels, were part of this program.

The exhibition entitled ‘The Book’ was opened by **Hans-Gert Pöttering**, President of the European Parliament. **László Sólyom**, State President of Hungary accepted the patronage of exhibition. Bibles in the official languages of the European Union were exposed, and included Bibles of stateless nations in the Scottish, Welsh, Catalan, Frisian, Lapp, Basque and Gypsy languages.

Distinguished speakers contributed to the works of the conference: **Prof. Dr. Piotr Mazurkiewicz**, Secretary General of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (COMECE); MEP **Hannu Takkula** (ALDE Group); Rev **Anzelm Fejes**, Provost of the Roman Catholic Premonstrant Order; MEP **Kinga Gál** (EPP-ED Group) Rev **Rüdiger Noll**, Associate General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches and Director of the Church and Society Commission; MEP **László Surján**, Vice-president of the Hungarian Christian Democratic Party (EPP-ED).

Message of the President of the Republic of Hungary

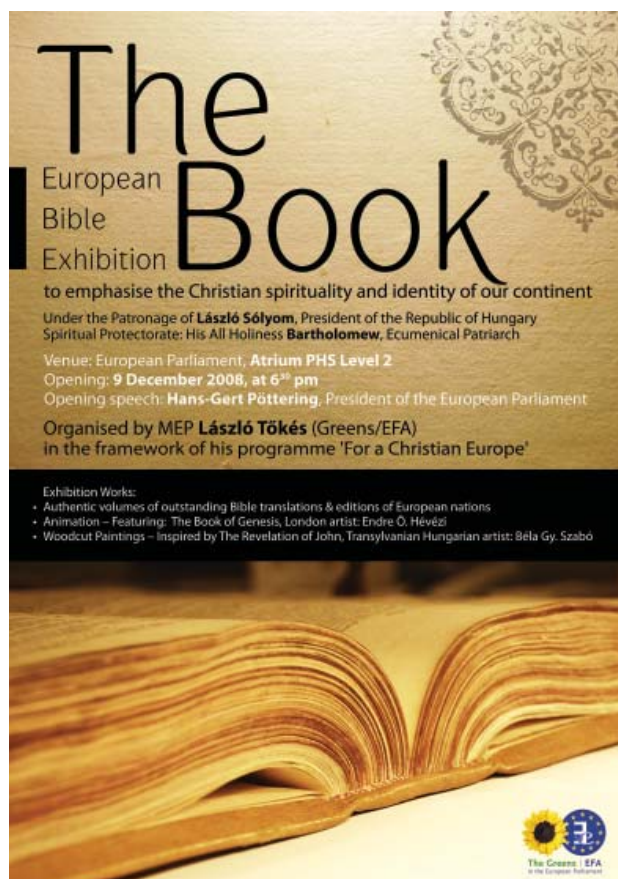
2008 is the Year of the Bible throughout Hungarian-speaking territories. Due to the call of Christian denominations, people would honour the world’s best-known book at art exhibitions, concerts and scientific conferences, in smaller groups or large-scale programmes everywhere in the Carpathian-Basin. People pondered upon its history, providence and effects. Choirs sang in the Palace of Arts, children drew in libraries and men of science exchanged their views on the topic.

For Christians, the Bible means the Word of God. Everything it implies, it represents, even the way it addresses the readers has organically been built during centuries deep into European culture and civilization. The Holy Scripture is present in the consciousness of even the unchristian people in several ways. The Ten Commandments, for instance “Thou shall not kill!”, “Thou shall not steal!” or “Thou shall not lie!” form the underpinnings of the modern world. Gáspár Károli, who completed the first translation of the Bible in the Hungarian language, named the Book of Books our “everyday bread”: the nourishment and the basic need for life. The Bible can tell us such things that every one of us may need to hear.

The Old and the New Testaments are not exclusively religious documents, but they constitute philosophical, artistic and linguistic sources too, which the peoples of Europe have drawn inspiration from. The Hungarian language received much from the Bible. In Hungarian for instance, a synonym for *doubt* originates from the attitude of Thomas the Apostle, and the term *Judas money* speaks for itself.

This exhibition exquisitely illustrates how the Hungarian culture from the first translations into our language has lived in vivid spiritual dialogue with the Bible. Besides historical texts, the exhibition displays the graphic art of authentic Transylvanian artist, Béla Gy. Szabó. Meanwhile, music provides a deeper spiritual identification with the theme. Due to this exhibition in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue every participant may be convinced of the binding force of our mutual European heritage.

László Sólyom



Opening speech

of the President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering



President Pöttering was presented a facsimile edition of the Várad Bible (1660)

It is with great joy and honour that I am speaking here today to you at the opening of this wonderful exhibition. I wish to congratulate and thank my colleague, Bishop László Tőkés, for bringing this exhibition to the European Parliament. Many outstanding examples of true European art and spirituality that we can see here today, coming from a European region whose people for centuries had to fight for their religious and personal freedom. But this exhibition shows us more than just beautiful art. Only a few weeks before Christmas the bibles exhibited here remind us of the

exemplary value this 'book of books' holds for us today. In our daily work in the European Parliament we are used to working on long and complicated texts, we are debating about phrases; we carefully weigh words for their value. We are faced with great challenges today and important decisions to be taken for tomorrow. And too often we forget that so much value and truth, true and valuable also for our work in the European Union, can be found in the Bible. Europe cannot possibly be explained without reference to its Christian

roots. The Partium region is a living example of this unalterable truth. But this region is also a living expression of the continued existence of the 'vocation of shaping the world in the spirit of Christ', as the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has put it.

The strength of our shared Christian faith has shaped the face of our continent. It is to Christian theology that we owe our conviction that human beings are made in the image of God.

In this spirit, we defend in politics today the inalienable dignity of the human being. No other religious or spiritual force has ever left us with such a great and weighty inheritance, which frees us and places us under an obligation at one and the same time.

Today, we as Christians must continue to work towards unity in Europe by ecumenical action. That unity has been achieved in the unification of Europe – even if it was only through great, sustained effort. Europe's future stands upon the Christian roots to which we bear witness. This is the core of our identity. We wish to continue in our commitment to it. In that way we shall be on the best path towards a good future for our shared Europe. In this sense I again wish to thank Bishop László Tőkés for his efforts and you all for your attention.

European Bible Exhibition

Before the opening of our International Bible Exhibition, let me recall the memory of **Aleksy II**, the Russian Orthodox patriarch who died last week. May I hereby offer our condolences to and express solidarity with the Russian believers. The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia had great merits in the remedy of the ecclesiastic and civil life after the fall of the atheist-communist dictatorship. On this occasion, I would also like to say, that a month ago we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the election of His Holiness **John Paul II**. President **Hans-Gert**

Pöttering opened the exhibition in his memory as well. Throughout history, the Polish Pope will also be remembered for his outstanding role in breaking down the powers of the godless totalitarian – Soviet – empire, and for his eminent role in building up European unity. Also President Hans-Gert Pöttering was welcoming last week's **European Prayer Breakfast**, here at the European Parliament. He greeted the numerous participants, who came together in the unity of diversity, emphasizing the importance of the spirit and role of our Christian faith and community

in the process towards a unified, new Europe.

Further, last week's visit of the **Dalai Lama** to Brussels, in the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue also needs to be mentioned here, since the Tibetan people and their leader still continue their heroic struggle with the nonviolent tools of tolerance and dialogue against the last standing communist great power, the Chinese empire.

We ought to thank God, that twenty years after the beginning of the East-Central-European change of regimes, in fact after fifty years of artificial separation, we can now,

▶ in the community of the people, countries and churches from West and East, celebrate our common treasure, the **Holy Bible**, while our faith in God's **truth** and **grace** remains unbroken. Slightly more than twenty years ago, my Transylvanian church in Romania had to witness, how the generous gift of our Western sisters and brothers of about ten thousand Bibles were recycled into **toilette paper** – with the active contribution of my former bishop. It is the miracle of God that under such premises, my **Reformed Hungarian Church** from **Királyhágómellék** – suffering in double minority existence – now can take part in organising an **International Bible-Exhibition**. I have to mention in the same context **Nagyvárad**, my city of residence and centre of the Királyhágómellék Church District where I serve as bishop. This city is the centre of the "Land of the Hungarian Bible". One of the most precious Hungarian Bible editions, the Várad Bible, which was published in 1660, is also linked to this city.

Your Excellency,
President Pöttering,

Let me thank you, that you are honouring the opening of our Bible Exhibition with your presence. I thank you and your colleagues for the support to our programme launched **For a Christian Europe**.

I would also like to extend my thanks to President **László Sólyom** for accepting the patronage of our exhibition.

In the ecumenical community of our Christian churches I also owe thanks to the Patriarch of Constantinople, **Bartholomew I**, for being the spiritual patron of the event, as well as to Roman Catholic Bishop **László Kiss-Rigó** from Hungary and Chief Abbey of Nagyvárad, Romania, , **Anzelm Fejes**, **László Fazekas**, Reformed Bishop of Slovakia, and last but not least allow me to thank the moral support of the representatives of our European sister churches and ecumenical organisations.

And also let me say thanks to all the organizers of the event, my dear co-workers and friends, who selflessly contributed to the organization of this "**Miracle of Pentecost**", as a result of which several European people and nations hear the word of God in their own language.

The first printed book of the world was the **Gutenberg-Bible**. The Bible holds us in unity as the most translated and most published book of the world: in the community of God's children. In the harmony of **Gutenberg-galaxy** we are able to meet today also the nations without country – through the Word spoken in the Scottish, Welsh, Catalan, Frisian, Lapp, Basque and Gypsy languages.

Allow me to draw your attention in particular to the Hungarian

translation of the **Book of Job** by **Péter Méliusz Juhász**, once bishop of Debrecen, Hungary, the facsimile of which was edited just for this very occasion.

"This book is the book of books,/ Precious pearl of the poor", wrote out great novelist **Géza Gárdonyi** in one of his poems.

Thanks to the translators of the Bible, **Martin Luther**, **Gáspár Károlyi** and others: "God speaks – in Hungarian" – and all the languages of the world, we may say together with **Sándor Reményik**, the Hungarian poet of Transylvania, in the spirit of multilingualism of the European Parliament.

Let's be grateful to God with the words of **Jenő Kiss** for the lasting work of the translators:

*"May translators be applauded,
for they conquered without sharp
weapons!*

*May those holy times be chanted,
that through shiny books were
lauded,
winning and enriching by the spirit!"*

In the midst of the moral crisis of our societies, let me finally remember the figure of my Mother, and the Biblical Mothers with the words of **John Thissen**: "My Mother was the best Bible translator. She translated the Bible to the language of Life."

László Tőkés



Opening of the European Bible Exhibition

“Between Two Pagans”

opening thoughts to the conference *Christianity and Europe*

Under the circumstances of survival and the traditional characteristic of isolation of relations between **Western** and **Eastern** worlds and civilizations, one could come up with an ancient historical analogy for the general state of our European Christianity in the 21st century. Hungary, in the Carpathian-Basin,

Christian beliefs, saw in **Western democracies** the ideal world of religious freedom. They looked up to them with noble envy. The existing connections, between Eastern and Western churches throughout the decades, though severely restricted, implied the promise that we would be set free from the atheist

The story, however, does not end there. The following detail is also part of the big picture and its roots can be located in the traditions of the French Revolution: the principle of **anti-Christianity** on liberal grounds would banish the church from the political arena and public life in a completely intolerant manner. Consequently, the Church would be relegated to the periphery of the civil sphere and social circles. This is the intersection where the Western world's anti-Christian character meets in anachronistic harmony with the East Europe's militant anti-church traditions.

As Member of the European Parliament, in this contradictory situation, I became conscious of the need to be a spokesman of our Christian faith and values, fulfilling a role to counter this unchristian atmosphere characteristic of the European Union. From these antecedent factors and bias, I announced the program titled: **“For a Christian Europe”**. As part of this program, the **International Bible Exhibition** was organized at Brussels in the Advent of 2008. This event of yesterday is now followed by a **conference at the European Parliament** titled: *“Christianity and Europe”*.

The large ecumenical delegation from **Transylvania** comes on a mission to the European Parliament to witness our Christian faith for which we experienced many ordeals during the nationalist-communist dictatorship. This might be the added value we could bring to Western Europe which has seemingly become alien to Christianity. In other words, this could be our “rich poverty” – our spiritual contribution to the united Europe.

All in all, we seek out and find allies in **Western** European Churches and Brethren, who have survived secularization and risen above the spiritlessness materiality of the welfare states. By joining forces with these allies, we dare to hope, act, and create a spiritually renewed and **different** Europe.

László Tóké



Closing prayer at the conference in the European Parliament

became the battlefield between the Turkish and Habsburg empires. According to contemporary chroniclers, Hungary “was ground between two pagans.” In other words, not even the “apostolic” Kaisers of the Habsburg dynasty, who were labeled as “champions and saviors of Christianity,” would treat Hungary any differently than the “pagan” practices Turkey applied to them. Therefore, both of these threatened Hungary's very existence.

Mutatis mutandis: small nations from Central and Eastern Europe, after their liberation from communist-atheist dictatorships, practicing cruel anti-religion and church policies, and after the fall of the Berlin Wall which reunited an artificially divided Europe, might feel they “jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.” With small exaggeration, this religious point of view holds true.

Christian churches in the **communist bloc**, which were subject to religious persecution and prohibition, yet survived despite their adherent's humiliation because of their

dictatorship. This promise gave us hope. Nevertheless, after the fall of communist totalitarianism and under the status of sustaining a free connection with the West, we were soon forced to draw a different conclusion. The religious freedom of the “free world” that lived in our imaginations and visions has no real connection with the classic “Christian Europe,” whatsoever. Hence, this “religious freedom” really implies a shortage of religions, rather than concrete “religious freedom.” The Western status quo is no longer an extension of the noble legacy of Western Christian prosperity.

Coming from the Eastern world of ideological – **atheist – materialism**, as a Member of the European Parliament I found myself to the world of **vulgar materialism** of the Western European consumerist and secularized societies. After 1989, taking into account the developing international relations of our Reformed Church, I had to face the shocking effects with the same harsh reality.

Concluding Message

Christianity and Europe

European Frameworks and Local Perspectives

On the occasion of the international Bible Exhibition and the related ecumenical conference in the European Parliament, which were organised in the **Year of the Bible** (2008) declared by the Hungarian-speaking Christian churches, we thank God for His precious gift: for the divine words in the native language of all peoples, and for the common treasure of Europe and the entire world – the **Holy Scripture**. In the spirit of diversity and multiculturalism, which prevails in the European Union, we live the miracle of the first Pentecost when the universal message of the Holy Bible “speaks in his own language” to everyone (Acts 2:6-11).

In Advent, we are preparing to celebrate the miracle of Christmas. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”, says the Scripture (John 1:14). Listening to the holy Word of God from the Bible and to the teaching of Jesus, “the Word who was made flesh”, we declare the following:

1. According to Jesus’ parable: the wise man builds his house upon a **rock**, so that it does not fall in hard weather (Matthew 7:24-27).

In harmony with this, the preamble of the Treaty – of Lisbon – on the functioning of the European Union also states the “need” to create “firm bases for the construction of the future Europe”.

We are convinced that the European Union is not only an economic alliance, but also our common home of rich historic, cultural and religious values, where our **common values** should prevail instead of – bounding or often separating – **economic interests**.

Konrad Adenauer’s words uttered in 1952, on the birth of the European Union, can only become true in this spirit: “As we confidently hope, this ushers in a new era for our Continent, an era of peace, common endeavour and new prosperity.”

2. The prediction of Prophet **Isaiah** says: “Then **judgment** shall dwell in the wilderness... and the work

of **righteousness** shall be **peace**; and the effect of righteousness **quietness** and **assurance** for ever” (Isaiah 32:16-17).

In harmony with this, the Treaty of Lisbon includes the decision of European countries to have a “common foreign and security policy... for the purpose of maintaining peace and international security”, and to provide “an area of freedom, security and justice”.

In the spirit of the prophetic words at one hand and the European treaty on the other hand we assume, with the words of the **Charta Ecumenica** that “with the Gospel, we want to stand up for the dignity of the human person created in God’s image and, as churches together, contribute towards reconciling peoples and cultures”. – This commitment is highly relevant right now, in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

3. We profess, with the words of Paul the Apostle: “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8). We are convinced that the **evangelical “law” of loving each other** is more important than basic values like peace, security, justice and equity.

The Preamble of the Treaty of Lisbon emphasises the “cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe”, “solidarity between peoples”, “unity in diversity”. Beyond this, we assume that fraternal love is more important than mutual respect and tolerance. Thus, due to the proposal of the ecumenical conference with the same held in October at Nagyvárad/Oradea, Romania, we **propose** that “Christian love should officially become part and basic value of European education” (quotation from the final document of the conference).

4. The Book of Acts describes the – night – vision of Paul the Apostle: a man of Macedonia appeared to him at Troas, and prayed him, saying: “**Come over** into Macedonia, and help us” (Acts 16:9).

The **division between Eastern**

and Western European countries triggered by the aftermath of the Second World War and the Cold War still lets us feel its imprints. There can be two distinctive and destructive forces observed which heavily afflict both sides of Europe. On the one hand, from a spiritual perspective and one of faith the Eastern **atheist materialism**, which profoundly relies upon ideological principles grinds the continent. On the other hand the **vulgar materialism** characteristic of Western consumerist societies ravages the core of faith.

It is our firm conviction that the division between East and West and the legacy of this impeding policy can be defeated only by striving for a **spiritual unity** of the two antagonist regions, within the European Union and in the ecumenical community of our faith and values.

In a metaphorical context that is the very reason for us to long for Apostle Paul’s visit Europe. Let God’s Words and His Church “help us” in the realization of our noble European endeavours.

With the words of the Charta Ecumenica: “Listening together to God’s word in Holy Scripture, challenged to confess our common faith and to act together in accordance with the perceived truth, let us bear witness to the love and hope which are for all people”.

*Brussels, 10 December 2008
The Participants of the Conference*



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament