DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION WITH REGARD TO THE ROMA POPULATION

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Abstract. What are our main obligations, derived from human rights, in the field of education of the adult Gipsy population in Hungary?

The problems of education of the ethnic minorities is still a delicate issue nowadays, as the norms laid down in the international documents of human rights are not quite clear and exact but rather general in nature.

As a consequence, better understanding of the issues of educational rights for the national ethnic minorities should be promoted.

After the Soviet Block collapsed at the end of the ‘80s and the beginning of the ‘90s it can be said that Roma population was one of biggest losers in several fields of these transitions. In the present economic crisis the situation is very similar.

Let us first review the database presented. In doing so, let us check the Hungarian data, which shows that Hungary is forth in the list of the countries with largest estimated Roma populations in Europe regarding proportions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Roma population</th>
<th>Percent Roma in population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>2500000</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>800000</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>520000</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>560000</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>300000</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Then, let us examine theoretically which are our **key obligations** with respect to our gypsy fellow-citizens, particularly in the field of adult education, which are stemming from **human rights** especially in the mirror of The Hague Recommendations.

Let us first review the issue from the perspective of the European Council since its programme comprises an action plan aimed at elaborating special educational needs for the Roma population. It is interesting that the concept of the European Council includes as a new term the so-called **authorisation for the right to education** (here: adult education). We may ask what this term is for. In brief: such right enables the individual to direct his/her life and to assume direction of the same from the state (see the strengthening of life-long-learning concept in the European Union). In broad: this right authorises the individual to influence decisions, to actively participate and to perfect democratic life. It is right which vests an individual with abilities using which he/she rely on processes associated with the overall enforcement of such right in the sphere of his/her social, economic and political competences. Further, this right facilitates acquisition of human rights, e.g. the right to work, the right to identity and the right to appropriate living standard. Thus, it contributes to establishing the coherence and success of the entirety of human rights.6

Next, let us set out from the general concept phrased by the European Council (to add, in an implicit manner for adult education) in a way that everyone should be provided with education corresponding to his/her personal aspirations and needs. We are of the opinion that such approach is absolutely adequate with the **personal** (person-focused) **andragogic theory** that is revealing in the practice of Hungary particularly among the minorities. From the viewpoint of education, certain Western authors call unity appearing in diversity the paradox of multiplicity.7

From the legal perspective, the right to education simultaneously means the right to diversity. This means that the term conceals the right to personal improvement and identity, the right to be different, the right of personal selection and the right to the treatment that can be best adapted to the individual.8

To **resolve the paradox** above, education politicians elect various approaches: way of seeing thing base don equal chances, approach building on social justice and observation of obligation stemming from human rights.9 As

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regards the topics of our presentation, we are only focusing on the latter one, i.e. obligations arising from human rights fundamentally in the mirror of adult education for the minorities:

- **Principle of the prohibition of discrimination:** it requires termination of all open, institutionalised or structural and concealed form of discrimination. Accordingly, it must be ensured that nobody is prevented from using education only because he/she is living in poverty, she is female, he/she is coming from an ethnic minority or is living in a geographically disadvantaged region or is competing learning or physical difficulties.

- **The principle of choice:** means the diversity of educational offer where different individuals, groups and communities can find their best-fitting environment, curriculum or qualification. Diversity appears as an option for learning trying to map the multiplicity of human capabilities.

- **The principle of pluralism:** here, it means raising the interest of adults towards and inspiring their participation in education through establishing connection among the various factors. This includes the business sector, the private sector, the media, local communities, voluntary organisations, political organs, labour offices, health service providers and other public institutions.

We need to make mention in some sentences of the intercultural respects of the methods of adult education:

- One, and probably the most important from the educational /training methods that may be adapted for the education, social inclusion and integration of minorities and particularly the Gypsies, is which emphasises the creative nature of intercultural education and is focusing on differences are basis for education. In this respect, the method can be described through the differentiation theory of Bennett and Bourdieu’s teaching on cultural capital. Accordingly, we may assume that persons regularly meet different cultures, which is obviously based on reciprocity, i.e. people repeatedly discover their own culture while getting acquainted with the values of other cultures within the frameworks of inter-culture.

- The other method is the so-called method of learning from contradictions and conflicts. We set out from that cultural conflicts may naturally arise from diversity and these must be resolved without using force. To be more precise, the legal and political instrument of the solution is to reciprocally restrict human rights, i.e. the rights of certain individuals, cultural groups and communities may not restrict the rights of others.

  It might appear that we cover more than necessary the relevant documents of the European Council. We are doing so primarily because the current Member States of the European Union, including Hungary, are at the same time members of the European Council. Therefore, it is obvious that declaration of universal values independent of cultures, namely that of human rights, pluralist democracy and constitutional state, protection, maintenance and promotion of cultural diversity, is in progress to endeavour to introduce the (adult) education policy principles, programmes and projects of the European Union into Hungary’s adult education.

We need to cover The Hague Recommendations already mentioned above. It is worth to note that each member state of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe assumed obligation to realise the duties arising from the closing documents of the meetings of the heads of states and prime ministers, the recommendations of the bodies of the organisation and the documents of the human rights conferences also with respect to national minorities. The human rights, including minorities’ rights resolutions of the UN also impose obligations on all OSCE member states and most OSCE members states are also bound by the norms of the European Council.

We must emphasize that, in addition to other documents, The Hague Recommendations comprise non-mandatory norms based on the so-called soft law, since this is characteristic also of the EU law on minorities and education that much rather impose political and moral obligations on the states, contrary to treaties that contain the so-called hard (mandatory) norms. Yet, unfortunately only some of the projects of the Socrates II or Leonardo educational and vocational educational programs were aimed at improving the situation of the Gypsies. On the other hand, the European Social Fund is expressing its operations to enhance participation in the labour force market by increasing life-long learning and the employment of women and establishing an active workforce market.
provided 31.5 million Euros for the realisation of the different drafts, which resulted in the establishment of 47 special labour offices that granted subsidy to 17,000 Gypsies. Realising the non-discrimination project, the EQUAL programme is also financed by the European Social Fund. It is also worthy of mentioning that OSCE also launched programmes concerning the Roma and the World Bank has also made its initiatives. On the other hand, OSCE, namely the High Commissioner for National Minorities, is monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and reports to each state on his relation to and practice regarding the topic.

Another important requirement is that the mother tongues of minorities serve preservation of collective identity. This right can primarily be exercised through education. According to the specialists outlining the tasks “the human rights documents on education on the minorities’ languages are somewhat obscure and general”. Let us add that proper references to the levels of such education (e.g. adult education) are unfortunately missing and it is not defined, either, what level of education on the mother tongue is to be provided for the minorities and what means should be used.

We need to emphasize the remark of the experts that international documents on education on the minorities’ languages, including adult education, set out that a minorities is not only entitled to preserve its identity through the medium of its mother tongue but also has the right to integrate and take part in the broader commonwealth society through learning the language of the state or the majority society.

Based on the foregoing, the becoming multilingual of the national minorities of the OSCE member states should be regarded as the most effective method to attain the goals of international documents concerning the protection and integration of national minorities. The recommendations regarding elementary and secondary education are leading in the policy of the language education of minorities and the programmes covering it but unfortunately no reference is made here for adults. All these findings can essentially be lead back to the principle that the intellectual and cultural development of the majority and the minority cannot take place separated.

In summary, we consider three instructions as indispensable in respect of adult education:

- States must establish conditions to enable the representative organisations of national minorities to effectively participate in developing and implementing the policy and programmes associated with the education of minorities.
- In line with international law, persons of a national minority are, similarly to other, vested with the right to establish and maintain their own educational institutions complying with the law and order of the given state.
- Countries may not hinder exercising such right by imposing unjust and overweighting legal and administrative requirements in the regulation of the foundation and maintenance of such institutions.

Finally, some conclusions that might be worth of considering:

- It appears that there has not been and there may not even be a sufficiently uniform political will and perspective that would focus on improving the situation of the Roma more efficiently.
- True that the problems of the Gypsies are ranked higher in terms of importance due to the pressure of the EU and other sources but the same is realised in theoretical and ideal approaches rather than operative actions.
- Last, but not least, the more efficient handling of this rather complex problem is often lacking adequate expertise and capacities.

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