

LANGUAGE RIGHTS ARE THE LITMUS TEST OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

As a condition of becoming a member of the European Union and NATO, the new Member States have ratified conventions such as the Charter of Regional Languages and the Strasbourg Convention 1995. These treaties state in black and white that the Hungarian language has the status of a co-official language in Romania, but also in Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine, in addition to the national language, in those areas where at least 20 % of the population is Hungarian-speaking. The Romanian law in force obliges the authorities to communicate in Hungarian as well. On paper, everything is neatly arranged and the core condition for European Integration has been met, but practice shows otherwise, as can be seen from the following examples:

Municipality of Tordaszentlászló – Savadisla

This municipality is 52% Hungarian-speaking, all communication from the police and the municipality must also be in Hungarian, all official applications such as building permits may also be Hungarian, the police must also answer in writing in Hungarian, in short, for a European citizen the economic utility of the Hungarian language is equal to the Romanian language. Under Article 76(2) of Law 215 of 2001, a European citizen has the right to full Hungarian-language communication with the local authorities. Since the municipality does not guarantee these rights, by using bilingual stamps, website and signs, a case is pending before the court of Kolozsvár. A salient detail here is that the municipality of Tordaszentlászló defends itself by stating that European citizens do not have the same rights as Romanian citizens.

Police of Marosvásárhely-Tirgu Mures

The police of this city must communicate in Hungarian on the basis of paragraph 2 of Article 120 of the Romanian Constitution, including with a Dutch interpreter, who communicates with the police in Hungarian for a Dutch client. Because the police had refused to do so, this interpreter submitted an infringement procedure concerning the violation of the free



LANGUAGE-RIGHTS.EU

movement of services by the Romanian authorities to the European Commission. The European Commission replied that if the Marosvásárhely police did not reply in Hungarian to a Dutch interpreter in the course of his work, that this is a violation of Articles 18 and 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The European Commission bases its response on case law on the use of the German minority language in Italy by European citizens, in these cases it was always ruled that the equality of European citizens should not be called into question. Incidentally, hundreds of thousands of Romanians in the European Union make use of exactly this fundamental right in the European Union, just think of a Romanian truck driver.

Kolozsvár – Cluj

This city, which is the unofficial capital of the Transylvania region, is hungarian-speaking for more than 17% of the population according to the 2011 statistics, but at the time of the signing of the Strasbourg Convention and the Temesvár Bilateral Friendship Treaty in 1996, 23% of the population of this city was still Hungarian-speaking. Under both treaties, Hungarian is therefore also a co-official language in Kolozsvár. After a long legal process and proceedings of the Foundation European Language Rights, Minority Rights and the Muszáj-Musai movement, the Cluj Court of Justice, in its judgment of 21 February 2017, ruled very righteously, that Kolozsvár falls under this mandatory bilingualism, although it is true on paper, it appears that to this day even a symbolic observance of this judgment is problematic, for example, the mandatory bilingual signs are not everywhere.

Ukraine

Under Ukrainian language law, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish and Russian is a co-official language in, which administrative units reach the ethnic threshold of 10 %. Unfortunately, the first act of the Ukrainian parliament after the Maidan revolution consisted of an attempt to invalidate this language law, which Ukraine reversed after fierce Russian protests. A day after the association agreement democratically rejected by the Dutch people came into force, Ukraine has issued an extremely dubious law, which in practice will ban all secondary and higher education in the minority languages Romanian, Hungarian, Polish and Russian, which has led to fierce protests from its European neighbors.



LANGUAGE-RIGHTS.EU

European Integration

If The European Union cannot enforce its own laws with its own states like the United States of America, as the United States did in the famous case of the Nine of Little Rock, where it was the Federal government, which enforced the fundamental right to education of black American citizens, then its raison d'être will remain morally shaky, because in that case the European Union is only a "paper" community of values. After all, the European Union is a multilingual state, just like Ukraine, the former Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, former Yugoslavia, Moldova and Romania. The Romanian example therefore shows that Europe still has a long way to go. Fortunately, the Netherlands showed leadership in 2011, by keeping Romania out of the Schengen zone, due to the lack of rule of law.

Drs G. Landman

Foundation European Language Rights Amsterdam

Author :	Drs. G.Landman
Title :	LANGUAGE RIGHTS ARE THE LITMUS TEST OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
Published in :	Most Magyarul Magazine
URL of Publication :	
Day Of Publication :	May 2018
Online Version :	https://language-rights.eu/MM/
Original Version : (NL)	https://language-rights.eu/MM/
Other Language Version : (HU)	
Remarks	013
Screenshot Of	



LANGUAGE-RIGHTS.EU

