

## **The absence of bilingualism in "multicultural" schools of Marosvásárhely/Tirgu Mures Parents in Marosvásárhely for bilingualism**

The fact that Hungarian children can study in their mother tongue in mixed-language schools, does not mean that the Hungarian community's language rights are fully respected. Marosvásárhely's mixed-language education schools are limiting language rights of Hungarian children solely to their classroom studies. School communications, their linguistic landscape do not reflect at all the Hungarian children's presence in these schools. As example the façades of the schools, their bulletin boards, and their publications are solely monolingual (Romanian only).

Romania boasts proudly about achieving multiculturalism and multilingualism, however, we could talk about multiculturalism only if the language of all co-existing communities would be present in schools and public spaces. We can not talk about multiculturalism in such schools where the language of the national minority is not displayed at all.

True multiculturalism does not limit the usage of different languages, but instead it honors it. It pays equal attention to everybody's culture and language, and encourages their use. It is well known that children's learning processes extend to a multitude of aspects, therefore to all extra-classroom activities and to all the other times spent in the school. Unfortunately, the message projected towards the Hungarian children of Marosvásárhely is that their language, their culture, and therefore altogether their presence is un-important to these schools.

How could we even hope that in such „monolingual” schools our national majority would learn to respect languages of national minorities or hope to achieve for Hungarian children to learn to believe that their language and culture is valuable? Monolingualism homogenizes people, it does not teaches the two communities (Hungarian and Romanian) to co-exist respecting each other. At the same time, bilingualism offers respect to all languages and teaches tolerance and mutual acceptance of each other.

By taking into account the requirements of bilingualism, a group of Marosvásárhely parents whose children study in "Dacia" School, "Europe" High School, "Liviu Rebreanu” High School and in the No. 2 Primary School surveyed the languages projected by these schools, and found an utter lack of Hungarian language inside or outside their buildings in what concerns public interest messages, bulletin boards, etc..

The parents approached the Civic Engagement Movement (CEMO) asking it to facilitate in the formulation of their request for a positive change. By giving professional, legal and technical assistance, CEMO helped with the formulation of their justified petitions, in requesting the usage of Hungarian language in school communications, inside the school environment and on the exterior, on the facade of the school, on different school buildings, and generally within the entire communication scene.

All school managements have taken possession of the petitions signed by over two hundred parents (fifty signatures per school); at their turn these institutions are required by law to formally respond within 30 days and they must indicate the official position of the schools regarding these matters.

Should the schools choose to refuse the present request, or if they do not respond within the time prescribed by law, the parents are prepared to turn with their legitimate claim to higher authorities and are prepared to take further steps for the language rights of their children. This, to make sure that at those schools where their children are studying true multiculturalism and multilingualism is to appear. These rights are guaranteed by the Local Administration Act No. 2001/215 regarding public institutions, the Constitution, and by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ratified by Romania through the Act No. 2007/282.

We are aware of the fact that similar circumstances described above also exist in other schools of Marosvásárhely. Therefore, if you believe that in your child's school Hungarian language rights may have been violated or not at all enacted, you should contact our organization requesting our assistance.

Civic Engagement Movement (CEMO)

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