

Ethnic Majorities and Minorities in Central Europe

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Studiul „Majoritate și minorități în Europa Centrală” abordează o problemă foarte actuală a raportului majoritate-minoritate în Europa Centrală și de Est mai cu seamă din perspectiva națională. După ce în prima parte încercă o definiție din varii perspective a relației majoritate-minoritate, articolul se focalizează asupra evoluției sintagmei majoritate și minoritate națională în România, acoperind perioada 1918-2000, subliniind manifestarea debilitantă a acestei etichete în perioada interbelică și a regimului comunist, pentru ca apoi să se insiste asupra acestui subiect în amănunt care ar normaliza relațiile comunitare.

Autorul insistă asupra faptului că în anii 1991-1992, Transilvania era apreciată din perspectiva securității europene ca o zonă de risc, la sfârșitul secolului al XX-lea numeroși actori principali din Europa și din afara ei, inclusiv președintele american Bill Clinton utilizând, cu privire la relația dintre majoritatea românească și minoritățile naționale (cu deosebire cea maghiară), formula de „model românesc al relațiilor interetnice”. Articolul insistă asupra faptului că în cazul României s-a ajuns la gestionarea optimă a relației majoritate-minoritate etnică și națională, într-un stat român și-a asumat ca abordare a politicii față de minorități, multiculturalismul, iar minoritățile l-au acceptat, ceea ce a condus și conduce la dialog, toleranță și concesii de ambele părți.



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The proportion between majority and minority in general, and between the nation representing the majority and national minorities, in particular, has been a permanent concern and a constant dilemma in the modern and contemporary thinking, particularly during the 19th and the 20th centuries. Authors such as James Madison ¹, Thomas Jefferson ², and Alexis de Tocqueville ³ gave much thought to the possibility of establishing democracy in states with groups having divergent interests, while John Stuart Mill meditated on the possible existence of free institutions in a country in which many nationalities live together ⁴.

According to the father of English liberalism, John Stuart Mill, the existence of representative democracy is connected to “the approximate correspondence between the borders of government and those of the nationality”. Likewise, John Stuart Mill appreciated that “it is almost impossible that someone could conceive as possible the existence of free institutions in a country in which many nationalities live together”. Thus, in this case, the state interferes in order to sharpen the potential conflicts between various nationalities and to use some of them to oppress the others. Indirectly, the English philosopher refers to the situation of the Hapsburg Empire, if we consider that these ideas were expressed on the occasion of the publication of his work on representative government in 1861 ⁵. His statement was confirmed by the political regime in Hungary during the Dual Monarchy.

The majority-minority relationship took its real shape with the division of Central and Eastern Europe into nation-states at the end of the First World War, as the problem of minorities living within these states (except for Austria and Hungary) became of great importance. The temptation of the newly emerged states was to homogenize the nation by assimilating in various degrees the ethnic minorities, thus maintaining a tense relationship between majority and minority, which, in the end, maximized the vulnerability of the new states.

During the inter-war period, the nation-state or the state self-proclaimed “national” became a “providential state”, which unlike the post-war social balanced society, was organized in order to maintain national sovereignty. The majority was the materialization of the Wilsonian principle of the right to self-determination of peoples, applied in virtue of the liberal majority principle, which brought the inclusion of more or less significant minorities within the majority of the population. Historiography has discussed whether or not Woodrow Wilson was aware of the ethnic Babylon of Central and Eastern Europe. Many historians tend to say that he was not informed, arguing that if Wilson had known the truth about the ethnic situation in this part of Europe, the borders adopted at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919-1920 would have been satisfactory and more favorable for Hungarians, Austrians, Germans, etc.

Since 1990, in the context of violent manifestations of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe, Wilson’s principles have again come under the scrutiny of analysts, from a critical point of view, claiming that the American president knew the realities of the area very well. However, he connected his principles to the democratic principles adopted, at least formally, by all the countries in the area. All these states adopted, at the beginning of 1920, parliamentary democracies which they changed or even gave up sooner or later, except for Czechoslovakia. One of the causes, among others, which made it difficult to introduce a real democracy, was the fear that national communities could not resist minority pressures.

Istvan Bibó held that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been dominated by a sick fear because they failed to achieve a mature democracy, and that they did not succeed in creating a real democracy because they were dominated by this fear. As we all know, being a democrat means not to fear those with different points of views, who speak other languages or who belong to different races or ethnic groups ⁶.

From this point of view, the peoples’ right to self-determination supposed that the new states should undertake an effort to integrate ethnic minorities, a difficult and sensitive

process supposing a certain degree of willingness to achieve dialogue and to agree on mutual concessions on the part of the two actors: the nation-state and the ethnic minorities. But neither of the two actors was at that time open to a concession policy. Hence, nation-states were fragile, considering any manifestation of minorities to be a direct attack on their integrity. On the other hand, the ethnic minorities – many having changed their status from that of “dominant nations” to “dominated nations” – considered that the new state was just an accident, hoping that the former status quo would be back soon. This was the case of the Hungarian minority in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, which involuntarily came to find itself at the periphery of its motherland (Hungary).

When we analyse the phenomenon of national minorities, from various perspectives, especially from the point of view of the majority-minority relationship, we have to take into account certain essential characteristics of various minorities.

The nation-state and its majority adopt a certain attitude and policy towards the minorities who come involuntarily to neighbour on their motherland. However, when dealing with voluntary minorities, not neighbouring on their motherland, the nation-state and its majority adopt, gradually, a policy of a different intensity. Of course, the two categories of minorities relate substantially differently towards the nation-state and its majority. In the Romanian case, since the inter-war period, the Hungarian minority was perceived as a danger for the integrity of the state, while the German minority was not. In the 1930s, the relationship between majority and minority worsened. Revisionism promoted by the defeated countries as well as by the Soviet Union exacerbated the fear and insecurity of the new states, generating a lack of flexibility in dealing with national minorities. On the other hand, minorities were to become a real “Trojan horse” for most Central European countries. Nazi Germany invoked the statute of the German minority arguing for intervention and the occupation of Czechoslovakia, followed by that of Poland, while Hungary referred to the “mistake of Trianon” and the sufferings of Hungarians in Transylvania.

The Second World War aggravated problems between majorities and minorities. At the end of the war we see the first ethnic cleansing in Central and Eastern Europe, as was the case for the German minority living in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Romania was an exception, the German population of Saxons and Swabs being deported to the Soviet Union or migrating as consequence of the communist regime and the economic situation in Romania. The expulsion of this minority did not generate a defensive reaction or one of compassion on the part of the majority. This attitude is explainable if we consider the period in which the expulsions took place, producing much suffering for the German minorities.

From another point of view, with the expulsion of the German population, the problem of minorities in Europe decreases in importance. The only compact minority that survived was the Hungarian one, living in three neighbouring countries: Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The relations between majorities and minorities (especially the Hungarian one) were to be influenced by the communist regimes imposed in the area between 1945-1948. During the first stage of the communist regime, the Soviet model imposed by the Soviet Union supposed an internationalist spirit, denying nationalism, considered to be one of the most dangerous phenomena of the former “bourgeois” regime. Thus, at first glance, the relations between majority and minority changed into collaboration, mutual

help, friendship, even brotherhood. However, the generous statements of the official documents and party media actually hid a very different situation.

The tensions between majority and minority became less visible due to the fear of possible state repression in the name of proletarian internationalism. Nevertheless, tensions were latent and there were some violent outbursts such as the manifestations of students in Cluj during the spring and summer of 1946. The adhesion of Hungarians as well as Jews to the communist party must be seen as a way for these minorities to preserve their identity, hoping to impose Moscow on Bucharest. In fact, this situation is comparable to the effort made by the Romanians of Transylvania in the 19th century, attempting to impose Vienna on Budapest.

In what concerns specifically the case of Romania, it is difficult to establish the actual relationship between the majority and minority during communism, as both national and minority policies became party policy. The emphasis on internationalism until the 1960s, and on communist nationalism during the next period, did not encourage better consideration either for minorities in the first phase or for the Romanian majority in the following one. In fact, the policy of the Romanian communists tended since the beginning to use minorities to consolidate the regime or the personal rule of the Ceaușescu family. It is true, however, that the real or imagined tensions between majority and minority were exploited in the late 1980s, invoking a Hungarian danger for Romania's sovereignty and integrity. During these years, pressure was put on the Romanian majority to make it express itself and to manifest against Hungarians. Nicolae Ceaușescu thought that this spirit would divert the attention of the Romanians from the day-to-day problems and would bring stability to his regime in the same way that Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's policy of independence from the Soviets consolidated the communist regime in Romania in the early 1960s.

This aggressive policy of Nicolae Ceaușescu increasingly isolated him and his family as well as provoking an unexpected reaction by the majority towards minorities in general and the Hungarian minority in particular. Romanians in general, and those living together with the Hungarian communities, refused to react to the challenges invented by the regime, thus the interethnic relations were of the best, even marked by a spirit of mutual assistance during the 1980s. The desire for studying national history which was very generalized during the 1950s and 1960s lessened and disappeared in the 1980s, the Romanians refusing movies on historical topics, especially TV broadcasts full of political propaganda which was an aggression against individual personality.

The attitude of the Romanian majority was not just a refusal of Ceaușescu's regime but also a result of the long cohabitation of the majority and national minorities. This cohabitation generated the concept of a multicultural society – so present in contemporary political and historical discourses – which was not a novelty for Transylvania. As the sociologist Gheorghe Siseștean noticed “multiculturalism exists as reality, as a dimension of the Transylvanian lifestyle” ⁷. Moreover, he claimed that at the level of the Romanian-Hungarian relations – and Romanian-German relations, we can add – between common individuals was and still is characterised by tolerance and mutual respect. This tolerance supposes both differentiation through complementarities, as well as elements of similarity. The complementarities and differentiations are manifest at the linguistic and religious levels, while there are similarities at different levels such as lifestyle, territorial organization,

agriculture and manufacturing techniques, economic practices. To these, we may add the joint celebration of important religious events, of the habits and customs related to the life cycle, mixed marriages, etc.

The fall of communism and the choice for democracy shared by the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe lead to two general considerations. With the implosion of communism during the autumn of 1989, a third common phenomenon occurred within the countries of the region, proving once more the identity of their destinies. At the end of the First World War the same peoples witnessed the phenomenon of the emergence – and belief in the virtues – of the nation-state. At the end of the Second World War, the communist regime was to be installed within the same area, in the same manner and with the same procedures.

The second consideration regards the fact that, even though since the beginning of the post-Cold War period, the changes have been dressed in radical formulas, the fall of communism has not aroused fear in the national communities for their fate, as was the case in the earlier periods.

Coming back to the Romanian experience, the fall of communism seemed to deepen the Romanian-Hungarian disputes. During the entire year of 1990 we assist at the unfolding of a quasi-permanent clash between the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority. This conflict came into the open with the sudden separation of Romanian classrooms from Hungarian classrooms within the mixed high schools abusively created during the Ceaușescu regime. This happened in Cluj during the winter holidays, with the breakout of violent conflict in Târgu-Mureș in March 1990, over the quarrel regarding street names in the main Transylvanian cities, or the dispute about monuments and national holidays. Hungarians insisted on celebrating their national day on March 15, the day of their revolution, while Romanians insisted on marking the celebration of Romania's national day on December 1. Each of the two actors perceived the celebrations desired by the others as prejudicial for their national pride. For Romanians, March 15 marks the programme of the Hungarian revolution of 1848, which indicated in its 12 points the union of Transylvania with Hungary, while for Hungarians, December 1 is the day when Transylvania was proclaimed separated from Hungary, and united with Romania. During this dispute, political decision-makers have been involved, not so much from a national perspective, as in order to obtain political support. All these events caused many analysts of the European security and European institutions to consider Transylvania a risk area during 1991-1992.

Nine years later, US President Bill Clinton referred to the situation in the Balkans in his speech of 15 April 1999 in San Francisco in an interrogative manner: "Who will define the future of this region? Who will offer the model of resolution for the legitimate problems of these peoples freed from communism? Will Milosevic with his propaganda machine, with his paramilitaries – who demands peoples live their country, history and land, or if not die – be the person that may offer models for this area? Or will this be a nation like Romania, which builds democracy and respects the rights of ethnic minorities?"⁸. This evaluation makes it necessary for us to make a profound reflection in order to observe the essential reasons which allowed Romania to transform itself from a country at risk into a model of relations between majority and minority. The "Romanian model" formula has entered not only journalistic language and political discourse, but it has also been assimilated by the

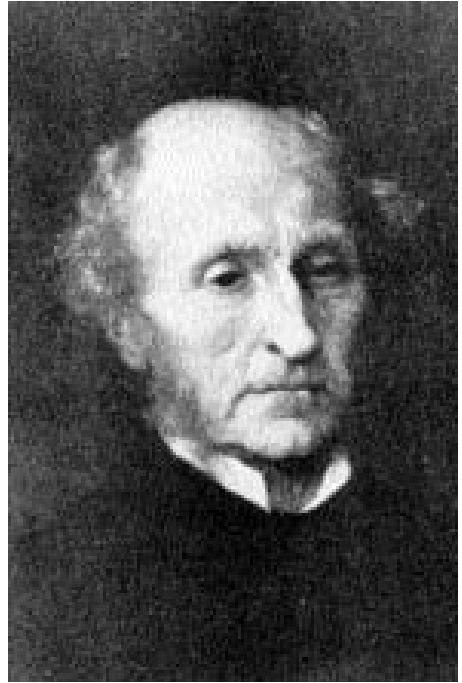


Fig. 1
John Stuart Mill.

European institutions specialized in monitoring majority-minority relations in the European context.

We do not propose a debate on the Romanian model of management (a notion which we consider to have more to do with dealing with reality than with the resolution of the minority problem, which seems to be too pretentious and difficult a task) of the relations between the state's majority and the national minorities. If there is a discussion regarding a "Romanian model", this relates to the fact that even though Romania was considered a risk area in the early 1990s, it has succeeded in avoiding situations that would generate armed conflicts, and it has succeeded in setting up urban relations of cohabitation. Undoubtedly, the Yugoslav experience was a warning sign for Romania's majority and for its national minorities as well. Therefore, the two actors have searched for the optimal ways for living together and cooperating. Another element facilitating this approach was and still is the option shared by the Romanian population towards democracy and European integration. In order to achieve an efficient and permanent dialogue, the Romanian state assumed multiculturalism as a way to approach minorities, and the minorities accepted it.

As we have already mentioned above, multiculturalism is one of the concepts frequently used not only among intellectuals, but also within the broad strata of Romanian society. Even though many definitions of the phenomenon have been presented, multiculturalism involves a set of definitions, many of which are quite ambiguous.

According to Gabriel Andreescu – who focused his research on interethnic relations – "multiculturalism expresses the concept/attitude affirming that the balance and correctness

of interethnic relations require acknowledging the need for integration, and the need for separation of the ethno-cultural communities, and sustains their mutual development, which it considers possible". We note that this definition aims chiefly the political expression of multiculturalism. As we emphasized above, multiculturalism, in the common meaning, constituted a centuries-long reality in Transylvania. This reality caused the former President of the German Democratic Forum of Romania to affirm in 2000 that "Romania can rely on a well established tradition of regulated and ordered living together between communities of different ethnic groups, not only at the level of individuals, but also at the group level, however abstract they seem to be" ⁹. Gabriel Andreescu analyses two notions which could appear problematical: "integration" for the minorities and "separation" for the majority. That is why the researcher proposes an alternative notion to the concept of separation, namely *privatitate comunitara*, a concept that could be represented fairly well by the formula "community privacy". We are sceptical about implementing this concept in the Romanian mentality.

It seems to us more appropriate to define the political expression of multiculturalism as an attitude, a policy leading to the conservation of the cultural identity of minorities and to an honesty and loyalty of these towards the state in which they live. This approach could bring a transformation of the ethno-cultural nations of Central and Eastern Europe into political nations in which the concept of citizenship would prevail over the concept of nationality.

During the years following the end of communism, Romania made real steps towards setting up normal relations between the majority and national minorities. Of all the countries in the area, Romania has ensured a complex institutional framework for guaranteeing expression and resolving the real needs of the minorities. Here we are not referring only to the Constitution of Romania which clearly stipulates the equality of citizens, without any discrimination [Source], but also to institutions employed at non-governmental and governmental levels to achieve such goals. This institutionalisation was exactly what the representative of the Armenians in the Council for National Minorities had in mind when he stated that the Romanian model "relies on an institutional edifice which I haven't met in any other country" ¹⁰. The author refers to three basic pillars: The Council for National Minorities, founded in 1997, the Parliamentary Groups of the minorities, the two Hungarian groups, in the Senate and in the Chamber of Deputies, and the parliamentary group from the Chamber of Deputies, other than the one representing the Hungarian minority. To this, we could add NGOs. After 1990 all Romania's ethnic minorities established unions, forums, and associations, this process ending in 1992. Following the effort of these institutions and organizations and the receptivity of the Romanian state towards the minorities' claims, we can affirm, without fear of error or exaggeration, that an optimal framework for the conservation and development of the cultural identity of minorities has already been established. So both the minorities' elites and the Romanian authorities should be aware that the issue concerning the majority-minority relationship is a permanent one, which imposes a permanent dialogue and a spirit of tolerance from each side.



NOTES

- ¹ J. Madison, "The Federalist", n. 10, 1787.
- ² M. I. Urofski (ed.), *Basic Readings in US Democracy*, Washington DC 1994, p. 73.
- ³ A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Democracy in America)
- ⁴ J. S. Mill, *On Liberty and other Essays*, Oxford 1998, pp. 428-430.
- ⁵ I. Salar, *Canătur înainte* [Foreword], in I. Nastasă, I. Salar (eds.), *Relații interetnice în România postcomunistă* [Intereethnic Relations in Post-Communist Romania], Cluj-Napoca 2000, p. 8.
- ⁶ I. Bilko, *The Distress of the East European Small States (1946)*, Budapest 1946, p. 42.
- ⁷ G. Sîntean, *Factori potențiali de conflict în istoria transilvănească*, [Potential Conflict Elements in Transylvanian History], in I. Nastasă, I. Salar (eds.), *Relații interetnice*, cit., p. 172.
- ⁸ J. Rosepepe, *Relații interetnice în România* [Intereethnic relations in Romania], *ibid.*, p. 20.
- ⁹ P. Philippa, *Identitate trinitariană. Perspectivă omni etnic germană*, [Trinitarian identity. The perspective of an ethnic German], *ibid.*, p. 227.
- ¹⁰ V. Pambucian, *Construcții instituționale ale modelului românesc* [The Institutional Constructions of the Romanian Model], *ibid.*, p. 83.



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Constitutia Romaniei⁷ – prevederi privind drepturile minoritatilor nationale

Articolul 4

Unitatea poporului si egalitatea intre cetateni

- (1) Statul are ca fundament unitatea poporului român și solidaritatea cetățenilor săi.
(2) Romania este patria comuna si indivizibila a tuturor cetatenilor sai, fara deosebire de rasa, de nationalitate, de origine etnica, de limba, de religie, de sex, de opinie, de apartenenta politica, de avere sau de origine sociala

Articolul 6

Dreptul la identitate

- (1) Statul recunoaste si garanteaza persoanelor aparinand minoritatilor nationale dreptul la pastrarea, la dezvoltarea si la exprimarea identitatii lor etnice, culturale, lingvistice si religioase.
(2) Masurile de protectie luate de stat pentru pastrarea, dezvoltarea si exprimarea identitatii persoanelor aparinand minoritatilor nationale trebuie sa fie conforme cu principiile de egalitate si de nediscriminare in raport cu ceilalti cetateni romani.

Articolul 16

Egalitatea in drepturi

- (1) Cetatenii sunt egali in fata legii si a autoritatilor publice, fara privilegii si fara discriminari

Articolul 20

Tratatele internationale privind drepturile omului

- (1) Dispozitiile constitutionale privind drepturile si libertatile cetatenilor vor fi interpretate si aplicate in concordanta cu Declaratia Universala a Drepturilor Omului, cu pactele si cu celelalte tratate la care Romania este parte
“(2) Daca exista neconcordanțe între pactele și tratatele privitoare la drepturile fundamentale ale omului, la care Romania este parte, și legile interne, au prioritate reglementarile internationale, cu exceptia cazului in care Constitutia sau legile interne contin dispozitii mai favorabile.”

Articolul 29

Libertatea constiintei

- (1) Libertatea gandirii si a opiniilor, precum si libertatea credintelor religioase nu pot fi ingradite sub nici o forma. Nimeni nu poate fi constrans sa adopte o opinie ori sa adere la o credinta religioasa, contrar convingerilor sale.
(2) Libertatea constiintei este garantata, cu trebuie sa se manifeste in spirit de toleranta si de respect reciproc
(5) Cultele religioase sunt autonome fata de stat si se bucura de sprijinul acestuia (...)

Articolul 30

Libertatea de exprimare

- (1) Libertatea de exprimare a gandurilor, a opiniilor sau a credintelor si libertatea creatiilor de orice fel, prin viu grai, prin scris, prin imagini, prin sunete sau prin alte mijloace de comunicare in public, sunt inviolabile.
(4) Nici o publicatie nu poate fi suprimata.
(7) Sunt interzise de lege defaimarea tarii si a nativitatii, indemnul la razboi de agresiune, la ura nationala, rasiala, de clasa sau religioasa, incitarea la discriminare, la separatism teritorial sau la violenta publica ()

Articolul 32

Dreptul la învățatura

(3) Dreptul persoanelor aparținând minorităților naționale de a învăța limba lor maternă și dreptul de a putea fi instruite în aceeași limbă sunt garantate, modalitățile de exercitare a acestor drepturi se stabilesc prin lege

(5) Învățământul de toate gradele se desfășoară în unități de stat, particulare și confesionale, în condițiile legii.

(7) Statul asigură libertatea învățământului religios, potrivit cerințelor specifice fiecărui cult ()

Articolul 37

Dreptul de asociere

(1) Cetățenii se pot asocia liber în partide politice, în sindicate, în patronate și în alte forme de asociere.

Articolul 59

Alegerea Camerelor

(2) Organizațiile cetățenilor aparținând minorităților naționale, care nu înfrâng în alegerea numărului de voturi pentru a fi reprezentate în Parlament, au dreptul la câte un loc de deputat, în condițiile legii electorale. Cetățenii unei minorități naționale pot fi reprezentați numai de o singură organizație

Articolul 119

(1) Administrația publică din unitățile administrativ-teritoriale se înlocuiește pe principiile descentralizării, autonomiei locale ()

(2) În unitățile administrativ-teritoriale în care cetățenii aparținând unei minorități naționale au o pondere semnificativă se asigură folosirea limbii minorității naționale respective în scris și oral în relațiile cu autoritățile administrației publice locale și cu serviciile publice deconcentrate, în condițiile prevăzute de legea organică "

Articolul 127

Folosirea limbii materne și a interpretului

În justiție

(2) Cetățenii români aparținând minorităților naționale au dreptul să se exprime în limba maternă în fața instanțelor de judecată, în condițiile legii organice

The Constitution of Romania ¹ – provisions regarding the rights of national minorities

Article 4 – The unity of the people and equality among citizens

(1) The state's basis is the unity of the Romanian people and the solidarity of its citizens.

(2) Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any difference of race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, sex, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, or social origin.

Article 6 – The right to identity

(1) The state recognizes and guarantees the right of preserving, developing, and expressing their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity for the persons belonging to national minorities.

(2) The protection measures taken by the state in order to preserve, develop, and express the identity of the persons belonging to national minorities have to conform with the principles of equality and non-discrimination in relationship with the other Romanian citizens.

Article 16 – Equality in rights

(1) Citizens are equally represented before the law and the public authorities, without privileges and without discriminations.

Article 20 – International treaties regarding human rights

(1) The constitutional dispositions regarding citizens' rights and freedoms will be interpreted and applied in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with the pacts and with the other treaties in which Romania is a party.

(2) If there are any disagreements between the pacts and treaties regarding the fundamental human rights in which Romania is a party and the internal law, the international regulations have priority, excepting the case in which the Constitution and the internal laws contain more favourable dispositions.

Article 29 – The freedom of conscience

(1) The freedom of thought and opinions, as well as the freedom of religious beliefs cannot be restricted under any circumstances. Nobody can be forced to adopt a certain opinion, or to adhere to a certain religious belief that are against his/her own persuasions.

(2) The freedom of conscience is guaranteed; it has to manifest in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.

(5) The religious cults are autonomous toward the state and enjoy its support (...)

Article 30 – The freedom of expression

(1) The freedom of expression of thoughts, opinions, or beliefs and the freedom of creation of every kind (...) are inviolable

(4) No publication may be suppressed.

(7) The defamation the country and nation, the instigation towards war of aggression, national, racial, class or religious hatred, inciting towards discrimination, separatism, or public violence (...) are prohibited by the law.

Article 32 – The right to education

(3) The right of the persons belonging to national minorities to learn their mother language and the right to be instructed in this language are guaranteed; the ways of exercising these rights are stipulated by the law.

(5) Education at all levels is ensured in public, private and confessional institutions, under the conditions stipulated by law.

(7) The state ensures the freedom of religious education, according to the requirements of any cult (...)

Article 37 – The right of association

(1) Citizens may freely associate in political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations and other forms of association.

Article 59 – The election of the Chambers

(2) The citizens' organisations belonging to national minorities, which do not obtain the number of votes necessary in order to be represented in Parliament, have the right to a seat of deputy, in the conditions stipulated by the electoral law. The citizens of a national minority may be represented by a single organization.

Article 119

(1) The public administration of the administrative-territorial units is based on the principles of decentralization, local autonomy (...)

(2) Within the administrative-territorial units where the citizens belonging to a national minority have a significant number, the use of national minority's language in writing and speaking is ensured in the relationships with the authorities of local public administration and public

decentralised services, in the conditions stipulated by organic law.

Article 127 – The use of maternal language and of the translator in justice

(2) The Romanian citizens belonging to national minorities have the right to express themselves in their mother tongue before the judicial proceedings, in the conditions stipulated by organic law.

¹ We include here the provisions of the 1991 Constitution and the revisions made in 2003

