

Press release
Transylvania Community College
August 2003

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The exclamation „Long Live Europe” of Valerie Giscard d’Estaing may be interpreted as the starting idea of the common European Constitution. The document adopted on 18th of July 2003 forms the basis of the autumn intergovernmental negotiations. The constitution will certainly define the future of Europe, however, some of the urgent questions remained unanswered by its current draft. Such is the dilemma of the protection of national and ethnic minorities in the enlarged Europe. The recent proposal of József Szájer, Hungary’s representative in the European Convention was not adopted. The initiative of Péter Eckstein-Kovács, Romania’s delegate to the Convention was luckier, since the expression “linguistic diversity” was indeed incorporated into the text of the constitution. Moreover, at the last meeting in Greece, the president of France has promised to the prime of Hungary that the subject would be re-discussed during the national-level negotiations starting in October.

In accordance with the above tendencies, the *Transylvania Community College 2003* was implemented in Targu-Mures/Marosvásárhely/Neumarkt, Romania between the 3rd and 16th of August 2003. Fifty young people -aged 18-25, mostly students in political science and law- participated in the project, coming from 12 European countries, representing even more ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The major challenge of the initiative was to reach an agreement among these young NGO representatives, based on which to draft a common proposal on minority protection in the enlarged Europe.

The idea of the projects belongs to *Ágota Ilyés and Barna Kovács* -the TCC 2003 project coordinators- members of the *Association for Community Colleges (ACC)*, a European organization based in Denmark, which provided the organizational framework, while the *Stadium Foundation* was the local hosting partner. The Transylvania Community College 2003 was a showcase of the ACC’s strategy, that of promoting the idea of creating and running Community Colleges debating common European issues.

In the first week of the course, an introduction was given to the special context of Romanian interethnic relations and their European dimension, reflecting on the current communitarian agenda, most importantly on the ongoing constitution-drafting process. Among the lecturers figured the following: Paul Philippi - president of the German Democratic Forum, Florin Moisa - executive president of the Resource Center for Roma Communities, György Frunda - European Parliament member, Senator of Romania, Ovidiu Pecican - professor at Babes Bolyai University (UBB) in Cluj; Emőd Veress - assistant professor at UBB, Attila Markó - representing the Office for Interethnic Relations of the Ministry of Public Information, Péter Eckstein-Kovács -

European Convention member, Senator of Romania and Réka Horváth, PhD Candidate, specialist in European affairs. In terms of media relations two press conferences were organized, both hosted by the Mayor's Office in Targu-Mures, chaired by Mr. Sándor Csegzi, vice-mayor of the town. Guest speakers were *Mr. György Frunda - European Parliament member and Mr. Silviu Jora, representing the Ministry of European Integration*, who officially took over the document in the name of the Romanian authority.

On the second week the participants wrote a ***modification proposal for a common European Constitution, focusing on the protection of national and ethnic minorities***. The organizers facilitated the drafting process by way of providing questions to be answered both by debate and voting. The structure emerged thereby was the following: main objectives and fundamental values (preamble), rights and duties of national and ethnic minorities, the institutions and other means to assert them. For detailed content please confer the attached document.

We, as organizers believe that the drafting of this proposal is a valuable youth endeavor, indeed deserving attention during the debate on the intergovernmental level concerning the constitutional draft elaborated by the European Convention. The document of a symbolic significance may form a reliable starting point of the negotiations in October.

Further information about the project, funding partners, results and the Proposal itself can be found at the www.acc.eu.org web page.

Details about the research on "Youth participation in the European constitutional process" are featured on the www.multiconflict.hu web page.

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