
The semantics of "multiculturalism" as a principle of public policy in the 1990s

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Abstract: The evolution of Romania after the fall of the Ceaușescu regime is directly related to the political and social balance achieved mainly by initiating a regional partnership with the neighbours, which will help to complete the necessary steps for inclusion in the European Union and NATO. At a new beginning, Romania needed a new speech toward the minority, a speech whose central pillar was multiculturalism.

This presentation presents how multiculturalism became a public policy principle in the 1990s. To this end, the amendments made to education in the languages of national minorities, as well as the legislation on the use of the mother tongue concerning the local public administration, will be presented. The method of analysis that this presentation uses is the qualitative one. This text analysis highlights the semantic and legal evolution of multiculturalism in the legislation regarding the organization of the Hungarian educational system in Romania.

Keywords: multiculturalism; ethnic minorities; international agreements; majorities; legal rights; education; political representation

Introduction

AFTER THE 1989 REVOLUTION, ROMANIA WAS ONE OF THE EASTERN European countries that followed Western democracy. Having a past with ethnocultural diversity, the road to the West was a difficult one, full of new challenges, among which was that of creating a Romanian model for inter-ethnic relations, given the fact that shortly after the change of the Ceaușescu regime we have of a tense period generated by ethnic differences (Târgu Mureș).

The need to dissolve these inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts will force the Romanian state to identify a solution for understanding the relations between the members of the cohabiting ethnic groups. That is one of the conditions for joining the European space. Once these conflicts were resolved,

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the starting point for Romania's real integration into NATO and the EU was created.

The relationship between ethnic groups is based on how their members perceive each other, the respective communities being based on interwoven political, economic, religious and cultural principles. Given that the ethnic groups in Romania in the 1990s were made up of Romanians, Hungarians, Swabians, Szeklers, Bulgarians, Armenians, Russians, Lipovans, Turks, Tatars, Aromanians, Roma, and so on, a cohabitation model was needed. All these ethnic groups had their own culture, which the neighbouring ethnic groups often knew little about. In addition to this aspect, depending on the geographical affiliation, we can talk about the different religious affiliations of the ethnic groups. An important factor is the preservation of the specific elements of one's own culture. In order to solve this social or rather ethnocultural problem, Romania had to choose between the multicultural perspective or the assimilation of minorities into the culture of the majority. The chosen option was the multicultural approach based on the groups' interpersonal, interethnic, or intercultural interactions. This model also allowed the capitalization of cultural differences, the encouragement of mutual knowledge or the exchange of elements between communities.

Review of literature

The historiography of the period 1990-2007 offers analysis on several levels: Individual, community/collective, and general. The first case is about studies or books with a memorialist character of the leaders of the analysed period. A clear example would be the work of the Hungarian writer Kőrössi P. József - "Hungarian Roulette. Talks with Markó Béla on literature, politics, society", which includes a comprehensive X-ray of the Hungarian perspective on Romanian politics about the minority. These works give us a certain degree of understanding and interpretation of political discourse. In the second case, I am considering works that present various events in the Romanian-Hungarian relations of the mentioned period, such as the works of Gabriel Andreescu (2004), Balogh Edgár (1999), Bárdi Nándor, Gidó Attila, Novák Csaba Zoltán (2014), Codrescu Costache (1994), Fedinec Csilla, Szarka László, Vizi Balázs (2018), Gallagher Tom (1999), Horváth Réka (2007) Salat Levente and Lucian Năstasă (2009), Siani-Davies Peter (2005). They are helpful because they provide a picture of the social and political impact of the speech. The third category includes works such as those of Radu Tudor (2019), Petraru Alina Roxana (2015), or Mihai Romulus Vădean (2011) which analyses the progress Romania has

made in the process of joining NATO and the European Union and contains references and interpretations on various multicultural manifestations.

The Romanian historiography regarding the Hungarian education system in Romania is relatively small, which also contributes to the motivation for developing this topic. The Hungarian language works related to the subject offered by historians and sociologists such as András Bethlendi, Zsolt Ilyés, Gyula Fábíán or Andrea Bogdán.

András Bethlendi and Zsolt Ilyés (2020) present the Hungarian minority's vision of the decisions taken by the Romanian politics after the regime change in 1989. They underline the desire to change the minority through the claims contested by the Bucharest authorities. The authors believe that although the education law provides sufficient guarantees for the Hungarian minority, its application has some difficulties. For example, the paper presents the problem of ethnic Hungarian children in an entire Hungarian linguistic landscape tangentially. There is no reliable Romanian language teaching method, which causes difficulties in passing the exams of Romanian language and literature from the level of middle school and high school examination levels.

Gyula Fabian presents the concept of autonomy on ethnic criteria but addresses autonomy on cultural criteria as a secondary theme. Cultural autonomy is a non-territorial form that gives national minorities the opportunity to govern themselves through their cultural institutions (Fabian, 2020: 318).

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Multiculturalism and minority – definitions and interpretations

What is the definition or what is multiculturalism? The term is relatively new and has suffered in the last decade, most of the time inappropriate attributions. Multiculturalism as a term occurred in public discourse in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Australia and Canada began to promote this term. In those

years, the two nations felt it was necessary to accept multicultural identity, creating a meaning and meaning of this term based on their needs both Australia and Canada had a restrictive immigration policy based on laws of the early 20th century (Rattansi, 2011: 21-29).

The purpose of multiculturalism was to create structures that would help integrate immigrants and ethnic minorities most thoroughly and respect the wishes of minorities and immigrants while promoting cultural diversity to benefit the nation (Rattansi, 2011: 36).

The situation in Western Europe was different. The issue of multiculturalism is viewed from a racial perspective, with most immigrants from former European colonies considered racially inferior (Rattansi, 2011: 40). After several decades of use, multiculturalism has yet to find a clear definition in the political vocabulary of 1990.

According to political theory, multiculturalism is a reaction determined by one of the phenomena resulting from multinationalism presented in most present-day states. A set of requests for accommodation to cultural minority differences. These demands come not only from ethnic/national or religious minorities but also from sexual minorities, feminist organizations, people with disabilities, etc. (Huzum, 2009: 45).

The philosopher Bhikhu Parekh attributes multiculturalism to theories about multicultural societies. According to him, the theme of multicultural society highlights cultural diversity. It is shaped by three kinds of diversity: "communal diversity" (the presence at the level of a society of communities living on different values, beliefs, and practices), "subcultural diversity" (members of a society with a common culture but different opinions and practices), and "perspective diversity" (within the community certain people criticize the core principles trying to modify them) (Parekh, 2000: 4).

Will Kymlicka argues that indigenous national minorities must enjoy extensive rights. Suppose they have to enjoy the possibility of self-government or education in their language. In that case, immigrants are not entitled to these benefits, only to so-called "polyethnic rights" – based on their agreement to leave their own culture (Huzum, 2009: 50).

In the case of Romania, too, we can talk about the existence of several ethnic groups rather than national minorities. In this case, it will treat multiculturalism only from the perspective of the ethnic, national, or religious differences present in Romania.

Referring to international law, the first definition of the term minority appeared in 1930, provided by the Permanent Court of International Justice. A minority is "a group of people living a distinct country or region, having distinct

race, religion, language, and traditions, using their ways of exercising the faith, ensuring the education and upbringing of children according to the spirit and traditions of their race, and who support each other." (Petru, 2015: 27).

A second international document that seeks to create a definition, although not directly, is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – issued by the UN on December 10, 1948. Through the UN subcommittee on the Prevention of discrimination and Protection of Minorities, it proposed in 1950 the following definition: "the term minority includes those non-denominational groups of the population who possess and wish to maintain stable ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics, manifestly different from the rest of the population. Such minorities should include enough persons to develop such characteristics. Members of such a minority must be loyal to the state of which they are citizens" (Petru, 2015: 29).

A difference between the two definitions is noticeable; the former considers sufficient housing of the minority group on the state's territory to receive the status of a national minority, while the latter conditions this status by holding the nationality of the respective state. Although there have been several attempts over the years to give a clear definition of the term national minority, an unanimously accepted definition has not been reached. Moreover, there is no universal treaty dedicated to the rights of minorities.

Until now, Romania does not have a national minority law. There is only one project related to the status of national minorities in Romania initiated by the government and rejected by the Senate in 2005, which has been under debate in the Chamber of Deputies for more than 15 years. According to Article 3 of this project, "national minority refers to any community of Romanian citizens, which since the establishment of the modern state lives the territory of Romania. Numerically lower than the majority population, which has its own ethnic identity expressed through culture, language, or religion, wishing to preserve, express, and develop it. Persons belonging to national minorities are considered Romanian citizens. They express they belong to a national community, so the minors are whose parents or other legal representatives have declared, according to the law, this belonging" (Chamber of Deputies, 2005).

"Multiculturalism" as a principle of public policy

After 1989 in the Central-Eastern European states, we see a return of nationalism after the fall of communist regimes, the newly democratic states being in a crisis due to the transition to liberal institutional mechanisms, which for the moment do not cope with violent demands (Stoica, 2015: 154).

In most cases, the democratization of Eastern European states realised using the state "builder of the nation" model. Although there is no ethnocultural neutrality in these states, they are actively committed to building a common culture with the tools of Western democracies. This mean using of policies on official languages, the creation of a uniform educational system, and a reform of administrative organization aimed at diluting the share of minorities. (Kymlicka, 2000: 24). It is contrary to the example of Western states organized according to multinational federalism. Why does the model of multinational federalism not work in Eastern European countries? One of the reasons is that in the case of minorities in the West, minority communities (Basque, Catalan, Scottish, etc.) do not have a neighbouring state to advocate secession. The phenomenon of the relative state is present in most Eastern European countries, which is an essential aspect of interethnic conflicts (Kymlicka, 2000: 31).

Given that the model of multinational federalism is unreliable in Eastern Central Europe, an alternative would exist in the cultural autonomy model promoted by theorist Otto Bauer. This model does not imply territorial autonomy but a considerable model of institutional separatism, self-determination, and extensive rights to use the minority language (Stoica, 2015: 154).

As an ideology of diversity, at the European level, multiculturalism has as its primary purpose the creation of the affirmation framework for group identities. In addition to defending diversity, it highlights the problem of communication between cultures to find specific differences that contribute to enriching the human experience. The European Union has developed a system in which the values of democracy and human rights weigh more heavily than the principle of sovereignty, with the rights of individuals being more critical than that of states (Plugaru and Pavlache, 2007: 8).

On the other hand, Radtke and Habermas argue that political multiculturalism intensifies identity problems, tending to pursue the segregation of minorities. Thus, minorities withdraw into a micro-unified life, supported by structures parallel to the majority population, in which traditionalism and nationalism become the central pillar (Freischmidt, 1997: 1).

According to sociologists' theories, there is a specific "pedagogical multiculturalism" focused on intercultural education. It can be achieved by reforming education curricula. The school can allow and even stimulate the minority culture alongside the majority culture. (Freischmidt, 1997: 2).

One of the essential components of multiculturalism is the transformation of canons and the reinterpretation of cultural differences into pedagogy by reforming high school and university curricula. This reform is carried out on two principles: The first gives everyone a diverse cultural assortment, and the second

gives appreciation to previously excluded groups. Over time, the use of the two principles will lead to the merging of cultural horizons (Freischmidt, 1997: 8). Suppose we refer to the multicultural educational policy. In that case, it aims at two pedagogical purposes, namely, the growth and development of the personality of minority pupils and the improvement of the relationship between members of cultural minorities.

When referring to public policies, we consider it "a set of interdependent decisions, taken by political actors, regarding the selection of objectives and the ways to achieve them in a specific situation." (Jenkins, 1987). In order to make these decisions, the state needs specific models. When we refer to public policies for minorities, there is a difference between "standard" and "models." The standard refers to the content of international norms in agreements and conventions that are recognized and applied by all signatory states.

In the case of minorities, the standard was given instead by the evolution of international minority law. For Romania, the adoption of international conventions (e.g., the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Regional Minorities; Recommendation 1201 of the Council of Europe; the Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighbourhood with the Republic of Hungary) represented the establishment of a benchmark of standards to be achieved. Once the standards are adopted, the relationship between international and national bodies returns to the discussion of the observance, by national authorities, of what has been assumed at the international level (Howlett, 2004: 12-16).

Contrary to standards, models are their own solutions, specific public policies developed by national states to solve the problems of a minority. These public policies in favour of minorities usually go beyond international standards, which makes them own solutions, within reach of sovereign states, with the aim of re-granulating the relationship between minority and majority. There are such models in the case of countries such as Canada, Australia or Sweden that have created models for the education of immigrant children.

When it comes to minority policies, the main objective is to achieve the standard. States may then introduce their solutions to the problems, but they are recommended to be an addition to the standard.

States should exceed the standard imposed by a convention by imposing measures that meet the needs of minorities in their territory. This makes public policies the main objective, which should follow the idea of a model rather than a standard because international provisions consider the lowest common denominator when proposing a standard. For this reason, the standard cannot provide an optimal solution to solve a problem in a national context.

The middle solution of the two would be the adoption of framework conventions that would come with several program-type provisions. Through this option, states can choose solutions appropriate to the national profile (Howlett, 2004: 18).

Romania in 1990 - context

The years 1990 brought drastic changes among the Eastern European states, especially among those that had large minority groups. For this reason, several inter-ethnic conflicts have taken place, which has helped draw attention to how a state relates to the minority through laws and politics. This period was the moment when states in this situation of managing or creating minority policies signed and recertified a series of European or international agreements and conventions, resulting in the emergence of national policies specially created for minorities (Pentassuglia, 2002: 57).

One of the most important documents signed by the states in this region was the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This act generated a series of measures to protect the identity of national minorities by creating anti-discrimination policies related to the use of minority languages in public through media in minority languages, education in the mother tongue, or preservation of ethnic identity (Călușer, 2008: 34).

Among the states in this situation was Romania, which, following the events of 1989, wanted to follow a democratic route to the West, the first step being the renunciation of the single party and the initiation of parliamentary democracy based on a multi-party system.

The consolidation of the political system was done in a problematic way, with the interval between 1990-1996, the political scene being dominated by the Social Democracy Party of Romania / PDSR, and the reform being slow.

Like the majority, the members of the Hungarian minority sought to adapt to the new life within democratic Romania, a process that was not relatively easy. The problematic situations between the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority, such as the escalation of the inter-ethnic conflict in Târgu Mureș, in March 1991, are proof.

Since 90, the Hungarian community in Romania has been represented by the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania / UDMR. This organization became a party that took part in political life, mostly in opposition. With the creation of the party, we can say that the Hungarian minority in Romania represents a parallel society. UDMR managed to create a system of separate institutions, not only an activity of organizing the life of Hungarians in Romania.

Hungarians have become recognized as a national minority, and gradually one can see the degree of their involvement in the public life of the state (Nicoară, 2005: 42-43).

All parties in power until 1996 were unwilling to respond to the demands of the main minority in Romania, most of the time the political discourse being oriented toward anti-Hungarian or anti-UDMR rhetoric. The change was achieved only at the end of 1996 when the UDMR was co-opted into the governing coalition. Their co-opting in the role of political partner was extremely important, and a precedent was created. The reasons for adopting this decision can be found in the need of the Romanian government to obtain legitimacy in the West by the determination of Hungarian parliamentarians to support legislative initiatives focused on reform.

At the same time, through this co-opting to the governance process, the RMDSZ is forced toward an internal reform, through which it has created a specific structure for a political party represented by a Council of Union representatives, an Executive Presidency, and a Monitoring Commission for the Regulation (Vădean, 2011: 38).

In the next ten years, we will see a UDMR constantly present in the government, being considered the most stable part of the power, its vote being systematic, focused all the time on elections within the coalition. Although their "loyalty" to the ruling coalition was constant, their demands for Hungarians' rights remained unsolved (Kantor and Bardi, 2001: 10).

Education in Hungarian

In the case of this paper, one of the main questions regarding minority rights would be to what extent multiculturalism was the principle that guided public educational policy in Romania in the 1990s.

State support for minorities can be indirect, through the configuration of state institutions, and direct, through special policies. In the first case, the electoral system, the party system, and the degree of decentralization play an important role; in the second case, policies on the use of minority languages in public space, education, and citizenship are relevant.

In the first decade of the 1990s, among the main objectives stated by the Hungarian minority representatives were the recognition of the Hungarian language as an official language at the regional level, along with its administration of education and culture, obtaining a territorial/administrative autonomy for economic development, the official recognition of the symbols of

the Hungarian minority and last but not least the continuous representation in the state apparatus and local administration.

The change of power and the organization of democratic elections have created the idea among the Hungarian minority that a period will follow when the objectives mentioned above will be able to become a reality, also considering the adoption of a new constitution, so necessary for Romania in the process of democratization.

After 1989, Hungarian education can be considered an initial stage of interethnic political struggle, with the Hungarian minority using historical discourse to formulate radical demands, which generated a period of transformation. It was necessary to institutionalize the Hungarian minority, whose leaders came to be co-opted into the government. At that point, they turned to the gradual negotiation of minority rights considering Romania's intention to go through the European accession route. Gradually, their applications were accepted, except for creating a Hungarian state university (Vădean, 2011: 38-64).

Following the Hungarian events in March 90, the debates on linguistic rights and educational institutions followed, which generated an extremist nationalist discourse in the case of distribution of power in the case of mixed-population localities. The result was catastrophic because an interethnic conflict in Targu Mures pursued it and ended with wounded, dead trials, and convictions. However, a valid solution to the interethnic issue was not found. (Păcuraru and Bichir, 2021: 201-208).

If at the primary and secondary education level, the Hungarian population in the predominantly Hungarian areas started to organize themselves into separate educational units; otherwise, the situation was among the university education. For the leaders of the UDMR, separating a Hungarian university from Babes-Bolyai University seemed a desirable option. However, with the activation of the FSN as a political party, the objective changed. After the 1992 elections, the Romanian Government and the President expressed their openness to the UDMR's mandate to grant official status to the Hungarian language at the local level and modify the education in minority languages. However, the proposals were not accepted due to the lack of direct dialog between the two sides. On the other hand, inside the UDMR, there were two wings, a moderate one and a radical one, which led to a lack of clarity regarding the tactics approached by the Hungarian party in negotiations (Horvath, 2002: 8).

Since 1993 we can see a change in Romania's foreign policy, focused on integration into European structures by connecting the state to international conventions. On this occasion, a new series of negotiations with the UDMR began, which tried to introduce standards, control mechanisms, and necessary

procedures in minority policies. Although Romania had rectified several international documents establishing a concrete framework for respecting minority rights, the impression of creating a Romanian model concerning minorities was shattered when the Education Law passed through the Romanian Parliament, which was the first Romanian model to be created. The creation of a state university with Hungarian language of teaching was debated. To put pressure on the coalition, the UDMR has collected more than half a million signatures on a referendum petition dedicated to establishing the Hungarian state university. Seeing that the coalition partners still delayed the initiative of the establishment, the representatives of the Hungarian minority threatened to withdraw the party from the government (Vădean, 2011: 85).

In response to the accusations of Hungarian leaders, the Romanian authorities stressed that in several universities in the country, there are faculties that have teaching sections in Hungarian, giving the example of Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. However, this aspect did not satisfy the Hungarian community; At that time, it was also supported by Hungary.

The Education Law of 1995 dedicated an entire chapter to national minorities. Namely, Chapter 12 provides for the right to study and instruction "in the mother tongue at all levels and forms of education." The authorities may organize at the local level, depending on the request, groups, classes of sections, or schools teaching in their native language. An important aspect regarding the discipline of the Romanian language is that, at the primary school level, minorities had school programs and textbooks dedicated to their history and language. Only during the secondary and high school cycle were the textbooks identical to those of the Romanian majority (Education Law, 1995: chapter 12). In history, the textbooks had an obligation to include the history and traditions of national minorities in Romania. If in an educational establishment in Romania, there were pupils belonging to national minorities, on request, they could benefit from a study-filled mother tongue and literature, as well as the history and traditions of the respective minority (Education Law, 1995: chapter 12).

Hungarian university education provided for the organization of groups, sections, colleges, or faculties on request in the languages of national minorities. Also, higher education institutions or multicultural educational institutions teaching languages established within the founding law can be established. Paragraph 3 of Article 123 encourages multicultural structures and activities within universities to promote interethnic coexistence (Education Law, 1995: chapter 12).

Through this chapter dedicated to national minorities, we can see the creation of a legislative framework for exercising education in the mother tongue. Although the law does not provide for establishing a Hungarian state

university, members of this community may attend university courses in Hungarian-language faculties or sections or create higher education institutions dedicated to members of the Hungarian community. Through these clear provisions in the text of the education law, the Romanian state has ticked the conditions regarding the observance of minority rights to education in the mother tongue provided by international conventions.

From the point of view of the representatives of the Hungarian minority, the education law was considered a step backward in Romania's educational policy because it nullified the "freedoms" offered by the previous communist legislation by the lack of the establishment of the Hungarian state university.

November 1996 represents an important step in developing relations between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian society due to the coming to power of Emil Constantinescu and the Democratic Convention. It was for the first time since the regime change in 1989 when the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania – UDMR had access to the government, being one of the voices of the ruling coalition formed by the National peasants' Christian Democratic Party – PNȚCD, Democratic Party – PD and UDMR. After this moment, the diplomatic relations between Romania and the Hungarians had continuity, and bilateral agreements in several areas were made (Vădean, 2011: 36).

Although it was co-opted into power, the Hungarian party did not have an explicit program. The main concern of the UDMR was the change of the Education Law to establish the Hungarian state university and to extend the use of minority languages in the public space through the public Administration Law.

The demand for a Hungarian state university was focused on the Hungarian community's need for a complete Hungarian education system, functioning on all levels, capable of producing culture but also frameworks for promoting this culture. This principle in Amy Gutmann's theory of multiculturalism ("community and culture reproduce each other") provides for the use of all incentives and the creation of all conditions to remain in the cultural-linguistic space of a minority.

The new round of negotiations on the education law was unsuccessful in the first cause, with coalition partners reluctant to establish the Hungarian state university. However, the Prime Minister and some government members have shown themselves open to UDMR requests. The first favourable results could be observed with the adoption of Emergency Ordinance no. 36/1997 to amend Law 84/1995 on education. According to Article 8 of this Emergency Ordinance, the legal framework regarding public education in the minority language was completed, namely: the organization and operation of units, classes, or study formations with teaching in the languages of the national minorities in each

locality or ensuring schooling in the mother tongue in other localities ([Emergency Ordinance, 1997](#)). On the other hand, Articles 120 to 122 stated that all school subjects could be studied in the mother tongue at all levels (including the subjects of History and Geography, respectively the specialized subjects at high school, professional schools, and post-secondary schools, respecting toponymy, names, or specialized terms in the Romanian language) ([Emergency Ordinance 1997](#)). In the end, Article 123 allows state university education could achieve through the organization on demand, of groups, sections, colleges, faculties, and educational institutions teaching in the mother tongue ([Emergency Ordinance, 1997](#)).

After heated debates in Parliament, the ordinance was amended in the Senate and almost rejected in the Chamber of Deputies. The UDMR accused the Romanian state of not complying with the provisions of the Treaty signed in 1996, namely Article 12, paragraph 6, which, according to the representatives of the minority, provided for the establishment of the Hungarian state university and threatened to leave the coalition. To calm the spirits, the Prime Minister proposed the establishment of a multicultural Hungarian-German state university, Petőfi-Schiller University, an ordinance rejected by the Bucharest Court of Justice as unconstitutional ([Chamber of Deputies, 1998](#)). To get out of this situation, the government launched the notion of multiculturalism in the negotiations on minority university education. Two years later, a modified version of the Education Law was approved, which in Article 123 provided for the creation of only "groups, sections, colleges and faculties with teaching in the languages of national minorities" but added "upon request and by law can be established multicultural higher education institutions. The languages of teaching in these higher education institutions shall be established within the framework of the founding law," respectively "the right of persons belonging to national minorities to set up and manage their own private higher education institutions, according to the law" ([Emergency Ordinance, 1999](#)).

Internationally, the leader of the centre-right Hungarian coalition – Viktor Orbán, has addressed the issue of education dedicated to the Hungarian minority, including the fact that the Treaty between Romania and Hungary should be revised ([Vădean, 2011,56-69](#)).

Starting with 1999, the Hungarian leader made a series of visits to Romania to meet UDMR's representatives, and to support even the idea of the Honorary President of the UDMR, Laszlo Tökes, to create an autonomous Hungarian university, under the tutelage of the Reformed Diocese of Piatra Craiului. This project was completed in 2000 by the establishment of the Christian University "Partium" in Oradea ([Partium, 2022](#)).

The 1999 Law on the Education of the Hungarian State University has defined the refusal to create the Hungarian State University, a decision argued by the concept of multiculturalism. The whole polemic on higher education in Hungarian was reinterpreted in terms of multiculturalism. The UDMR requests for this to be reduced to the administrative reorganization of Babeş-Bolyai University as a multicultural one (Culic 2020).

Final Remarks

In the first ten years after the regime change, the Romanian public policy path focused on the adoption of legislative measures dedicated to the protection of minorities, this being also one of the preconditions for Romania's accession to the European Union.

Romania's efforts to develop and maintain a climate of tolerance and multicultural understanding have led to the creation of a legislative and institutional framework conducive to protecting the rights and development of national minorities. In addition to the international legal framework given by universal human rights, persons belonging to national minorities also benefit from special cultural, linguistic, and religious rights.

The legislation of the 1990s focused on imposing the criteria of non-discrimination, the possibility of using the mother tongue in education and administration, and the political representation of minorities at the central and local levels.

However, the adopted enforcement measures have often been unapplied, either for financial reasons or because of stereotypes in the national mind. However, the use of a multicultural policy will continue to be one of the objectives of the main ruling parties that succeeded after 2000, with the Hungarian minority playing an important role in Romania's accession processes to the European Union and NATO.

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