

HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN TRANSYLVANIA

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Abstract: Our study strives to present, outline the present state of affairs of Romanian (and within it Transylvanian, minority) higher education in the Hungarian language, respectively the related education policy and strategic objectives. A part of the challenges connected to Transylvanian Hungarian higher education are identical to those characteristic for the Romanian, or more generally for the entire European system of university education, therefore the first part of our treatise briefly presents some of the consequences and challenges of the so-called “Bologna Process” regarding higher education. Simultaneously, Transylvanian Hungarian higher education has also got a series of specific features, thus in the second – more extensive – part of the paper the Hungarian language university education system, respectively the connected national policy, demographic, minority rights aspects are outlined. The latter analyses obviously could not ignore the claim of the Hungarian community in Romania for an independent, Hungarian language public university (the “Bolyai” University), an unfulfilled demand that had been reformulated several times since 1989. The questions raised by this demand are detailed in the last part of the study.

Palabras clave: Higher education policy in the EU, Hungarian language higher education in Romania, minority educational policy, Hungarian system of higher education in Transylvania.

From the perspective of its external power to enforce its own interests, respectively its internal strategic aims, the past 23 years since the change of the political system in Romania has not been uneventful for the

Transylvanian Hungarian minority regarding higher education in Hungarian in Romania (Transylvania). The problem of the stand-alone public university in the Hungarian language, i.e. the perpetually reformulated opportunities to re-establish the former “Bolyai University” discontinued by the communist dictatorship in 1959, has been an issue continuously on the agenda for the last more than two decades, producing debates and polemics – without reaching a consensus up to the present day. The outlining of the state of affairs, more exactly the tasks and future prospects of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education, the analysis of the expectations, demands and necessities defined by minority society regarding universities have been present in the narrower professional and wider social public sphere with a similar intensity. Furthermore, the relationship between the public and private institutions of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education, the issue of the complementarity and/or competition of the higher education offer formed by these, the necessity and the degree to respond to the expectations of national policy and of the labour market, and last, but not the least, the formulation of possibilities and inevitable needs regarding the establishment and start off of the elements and programmes still missing from the Hungarian language training offer in Romania, have also been permanent – and again not recent – subjects to debate upon. And obviously, the budgetary and political issues pertaining to all the mentioned issues have also been on the agenda: *Whose* task is it to fund entirely or partially a Transylvanian Hungarian university network that performs public tasks? (that of the prevailing Romanian, or Hungarian government?) *Which* training domains, programmes should be financed from these sources,

generally speaking from the point of view of the future of the Hungarian community, within it especially that of the Hungarian minority? *Who*, i.e. which institutions are the most worthy and the most suitable to carry out these professional and training tasks combined with the performance of a national policy mission? *How* should the executive power in Hungary, respectively the political representative organisations of the Hungarian community in Romania approach the issue, support and tackle with the problems of Hungarian language higher education? Although the Hungarian language higher education in Romania has been characterised in the past more than twenty years since the system change by definite expansion both in its offer and the number of students and teaching staff, all these questions continue to represent a serious challenge to the Transylvanian Hungarian community and to the whole professional and political life of Transylvanian Hungarians and Hungary.

As it can be seen from the nature and character of the above outlined problems, the summary and analysis of the present and future of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education cannot lack a strategic point of view shaped by narrowly understood education policy, i.e. current higher education challenges and tasks, either. Accordingly, the present treatise will try to make use at the same time of both the larger social science and the narrower professional policy (education policy) viewpoints and methodologies – and our conclusions will also be formulated in the spirit of this duality¹.

It is no simple task nowadays to attempt to give a detailed analysis of the situation and the objectives of higher education in the Hungarian language in Romania. The difficulty lies in the fact that by today the issue has grown into a complex problem, characterised by divergent points of view and considerations, and therefore inquiries into it also necessitate expertise in many different fields, thorough knowledge, a large number of statistical data and exhaustive “background information”. Consequently, the author of the present paper pays his tribute with plain respect and recognition to all those experts, institutions and bodies that have been trying recently to perform a thorough analysis of the state of affairs and the tasks of our minority higher education. They had to be mindful of the transformations of the European system of education (the “Bologna Process”), and of its consequences in Romania; they had to be aware of statistical data referring to Romanian (and

within it Hungarian language) higher education; of the labour market analyses and indicators, of demand and supply predictions, they had to be able to link demographic data with educational policy considerations, they had to know their way around domestic legislation with reference to higher education, respectively the development opportunities lying therein, they had to be well-informed in connection with Romanian normative funding, respectively the opportunities in Hungarian support policy – and the list could probably be continued. To all of this, one can add the national and minority policy aspect, as a clear-cut common element of various strategic papers, which fundamentally defines the present and future of higher education in the Hungarian language in Romania, in other words the collection of principles and objectives that create a context, in which even issues that could otherwise be discussed easily in a narrow professional, educational policy setting, become problematic, questionable, disputable.

The full and exhaustive analysis of the complex issues outlined is not the aim of this paper. We do not strive to deduce present-day Transylvanian Hungarian higher education from a historic perspective, or from the traditions of the past, nor is it our aim to argue why independent, full-spectrum higher education in the mother tongue is of decisive importance for a national community². Similarly, an extremely significant issue of our education policy, the placement of higher education in Hungarian into the context of the challenges of general European higher education is not the subject of our present inquiries, either. It goes without saying that a part of the present problems and tasks of Hungarian language higher education in Romania is completely identical with the current issues of domestic Romanian language higher education, and also with those of higher education in Hungary, or even with those of the unified European higher education (the so-called *European Higher Education Area*). Such challenges, well-known today by universities and academics are: the expansion of higher education, respectively that BSc (*Bachelor of Science*) level diplomas become more and more widespread, and gradually take over the role of former high-school graduation³; the decline in quality as a negative consequence of expansion and of the normative system of financing (the so-called per capita funding) also represents a serious problem as higher education is struggling trapped between the imperativeness

of quantity and quality; the fact that higher education institutions have become market players is yet another challenge worldwide and on a European level, just as the handling of the resulting inherent strategic problems (over-supply, competition etc.); but at the same time we could also mention the questions related to the theoretically existing equivalent curricula and diplomas, which still cause so many problems on the level of the European Union. It is no mere chance therefore that the examination of these major challenges and problems, the analyses of the advantages and disadvantages of the Bologna Process and the search to resolve its negative consequences have been in the forefront of educational policy specialist literature in recent years – obviously including the inquiries regarding Hungarian language higher education in Romania.

As we have earlier noted, Transylvanian (or in a wider sense, Romanian) Hungarian educational policy has nonetheless an inevitable national strategic component, which weighs heavy primarily on analyses and debates referring to the vision or the future prospects of our higher education. This is the aspect related to *present* and *future*, which we will attempt to discuss in this essay, and even if we cannot provide exhaustive, ample answers, we still at least hope to formulate viewpoints worthy of the consideration of specialists, academics, and the social public sensitive of the strategic questions of our higher education.

In order to assess the present state of affairs of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education, let us consider the present academic year, i.e. that of 2012/2013. The table below presents all the institutions and locations, where the major part of higher education in the Hungarian language is presently carried out, summing up at the same time the total number of students and full-time academic staff⁴. The first column of the table includes the institutions, which in the past few years have formed the backbone of Transylvanian Hungarian language higher education, both due to their territorial coverage and the size of their teaching staffs, as well as the number of their students. Nevertheless, it also has to be mentioned that some Hungarian universities (the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, the University of Debrecen, the Corvinus University of Budapest, the College for Modern Business Studies, or the Budapest Business School) operate further undergraduate programmes in Tg. Mureş

(Marosvásárhely), Oradea (Nagyvárad), Miercurea Nirajului (Nyárádszereda) and Odorheiu Secuiesc (Székelyudvarhely), and at the same time the Budapest Business School and the Corvinus University of Budapest have started master's degree programmes in Cluj (Kolozsvár) and Miercurea Ciuc (Csíkszereda). These programmes differ from one another regarding their forms, some of them are full-time, while others part-time, and there were a total number of 615 students enrolled to these in the year when the survey was done. At the same time, it is important to highlight that these students – although they finish a part of their studies in Transylvania – are the students of universities in Hungary from a statistical point of view, and they receive their diplomas from these institutions (see the second last row of the table). It is also worth mentioning in connection with the data in the table that the third on the list, based on numbers of students and teaching staff is the Hungarian section of the Medical and Pharmaceutical University of Tg. Mureş, in connection with which, in the light of last year's events, one can rightfully ask: is there at all a Hungarian section at that university, and if yes, what exactly it consists of (autonomy, decision making authority, language of teaching etc.)? Of the six universities representing the core of Transylvanian Hungarian language higher education 3 are funded by the Romanian State (BBU, MPUTGM, TGMUA), while 3 are private higher education institutions. Two of the latter (SU, PCU) are financially sustained by Hungary and its Government and Parliament, and the Protestant Theological Institute is funded by the protestant churches (the Calvinist Reformed, the Unitarian, and the Lutheran).

The last series of data from academic year 2012/2013 – nearly 12,000 students and a total number of almost 800 teaching staff – throws a light first of all on the fact that the higher education training offer in the Hungarian language in Transylvania, the number of students, and of academic staff have been growing continuously over the past 23 years, and it can also be clearly seen from the table that a so-called *Hungarian system of higher education* has gradually developed in Transylvania following the political system change in 1989, both from a geographic perspective, and from the point of view of the numbers of students and teaching staff. In spite of that, the Hungarian youth continues to be underrepresented in higher education (in comparison with the majority population), and

in certain fields there is still no university level education in Hungarian. (Such fields are for instance Veterinary Science, Agriculture, and a large part of the Engineering and Music programmes. In 2010 there has probably been a single positive “breakthrough” in this respect: Law education in Hungarian has (re)started in Transylvania, at the Cluj/Kolozsvár Faculty of the Sapientia University. The imperfections of the full-spectrum of higher education in the mother tongue can further be detailed if we study separately the availability of undergraduate, master’s degree, and PhD programmes.)

The problems regarding the participation of Hungarian students in higher education is well reflected by the fact that while 6.5% of the total population of Romania was ethnic Hungarian according to the 2011 census⁵, only about 5% of all Romanian citizen higher education students belong to the Hungarian minority. Another fact may also be significant: whereas in Hungary 1 of 100 Hungarians are studying in higher education, in Transylvania only 0.3 ethnic Hungarians are higher education students from 100.

Figure 1. Academic year 2012/2013 in figures

Institution	Location	BSc students	MSc students	Other (PhD)	Total no. of students	Full-time academic staff
Babeş–Bolyai University (BBU)	Cluj (Kolozsvár) and training in the Hungarian language at its affiliated departments (Gheorgheni/Gyergyószentmiklós, Sfântu-Gheorghe/Sepsiszentgyörgy, Satu Mare/Szatmárnémeti, Székelyudvarhely/Odorhei u Secuiesc, Kézdivásárhely/Târgu Secuiesc)	4,928	789	55	5,772	326
Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (SU)	Miercurea Ciuc (Csíkszereda), Cluj (Kolozsvár), Tg. Mureş (Marosvásárhely)	1,988	-	-	1,988	187
Medical and Pharmaceutical University of Tg. Mureş (Marosvásárhely) (MPUTGM)	Tg. Mureş (Marosvásárhely)	1684	-	130	1,814	132
Partium Christian University (PCE)	Oradea (Nagyvárad)	765	213	-	978	88
Tg. Mureş (Marosvásárhely) University of Art (TGMUA)	Tg. Mureş (Marosvásárhely)	131	49	49	229	30
Protestant Theological Institute (PTI)	Cluj (Kolozsvár)	139	-	-	139	15
Foreign (Hungarian) universities educational programmes		308	302	5	615	-
Total					11,535	778

The data referring to the total number of students highlights an interesting, noteworthy state of affairs. We could say that a total number of 12,000 students studied within the framework of the Transylvanian system of Hungarian higher education in the academic year of 2012/2013, if counting the full cycles of training (all years of study). Taking the different lengths of the various academic programmes – undergraduate, master's degree, PhD – into consideration, respectively having regard for the weighted number of participating students (in other words dividing the total number of 12,000 students in a year by the average length of 3.8-4 years of a study programme) we can conclude that approximately 3,000 students were enrolled in the respective analysed year into each year of study of all the Hungarian programmes of the different Transylvanian higher education institutions – and this number included all the students in their first undergraduate programmes, as well as those striving to obtain a “second diploma”, respectively the ones that took part in several academic programmes in parallel. At the same time, based on the internal statistics of our higher education institutions, we can say that a rough number of 2,200-2,300 “new students” enrol into a Hungarian language undergraduate programme of a higher education institution in a given academic year, as freshly graduating from secondary schools (or having graduated in earlier years). What is the problem detected from these numbers? We know from a series of other surveys done in the past years that there is a constant number of around 8200-8300 Hungarian secondary school graduates applying to take their graduation examinations each year since 2006 in Transylvania, and that the number of those successfully taking their final secondary school examinations is around 7,500. If these two numbers are compared, it becomes evident that only about one fourth of our secondary school graduates carry on with their studies in one of the academic programmes in Hungarian. This state of affairs has been recently confirmed by a study undertaken by the Higher Education Work-Group of the Regional Committee in Cluj (Kolozsvár) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences⁶, as well as the secondary school survey conducted by the “Omnibus” Ltd. from Gheorgheni (Gyergyószentmiklós), making it clear at the same time that only half of those graduating in Hungarian from a secondary school carry on with their studies on a higher level, of which about 50-50% partake in Hungarian, respectively Romanian language higher education in Romania⁷. In connection

with the students with a Hungarian mother tongue missing from undergraduate training there had been a long lasting presumption that these carry on with their studies partly abroad – primarily at universities in Hungary –, but by now it has become clear that this was not the case, as only a small percentage of fresh secondary school graduates enrol for undergraduate programmes in foreign institutions⁸. The continuation of studies abroad after the termination of an undergraduate programme is proportionally much more significant among Transylvanian Hungarian youngsters – and this is especially true with respect to participation in various PhD programmes and schools in Hungary. Related to the figures and percentages above, it must also be underlined that while the proportion of Hungarian youth in Romania participating in higher education is comparable to the European Union average (50-65%), in terms of access to higher education in the mother tongue, the proportion is only half of that. (Another data series related to the participation of the Transylvanian Hungarian youth in higher education, pointing to other types of conclusions, refers to the question of how many students effectively obtain a diploma, in other words, what is the percentage of drop-out? Without entering into details, one can generally say with respect to Romania, that the country is placed somewhere around the upper limit of the average drop-out percentages of various European higher education systems – 15-50% – and this is obviously also true for ethnic Hungarian students in Romania.)

A further problem (challenge) of Hungarian higher education in Romania (Transylvania) could be the dissolution of its current, relative “closed character”, i.e. its more powerful, more explicit engagement in domestic and international scientific life. It can be ascertained that our higher education programmes in Hungarian have established educational and scientific co-operations primarily with partners from Hungary, which is without any doubt a natural and positive fact, yet it also purports a certain danger of “linguistic closure”. Student mobility statistics in the recent years uphold this state of affairs (Hungary being the primary target country of Transylvanian Hungarian students), and another symptom of the mentioned “linguistic closure” could be the infrequency of Hungarian–Romanian scientific and professional communications in some fields. When discussing about the present and future of Hungarian language higher education in

Romania, one obviously must not omit the issue related to the existence and likelihood of the independent Hungarian language public university. Since the change of the political system in 1989 (or since the 1959 suspension of the Bolyai University, to go back even further in time) the creation of a state-funded, independent Hungarian university in Romania has been the permanent, legitimate, and so far unfulfilled demand, claim of the Hungarian minority. This right, request of the Transylvanian Hungarian community can obviously not be given up either today or in the future – if not for any other reason, then because of the obligations of the Romanian State toward its own (minority) citizens. However, in relation with the events and occurrences connected to Hungarian language higher education in Romania in the past 23 years, especially the last decade, one can rightfully ask how the foundation and the functioning of the independent, state-funded Hungarian university would be practical in the present higher education circumstances. What do we mean, what could we mean when talking about the “Bolyai University” today? The author of the present paper is strongly convinced that the name of the former Hungarian university of Cluj (Kolozsvár) has grown out its narrow “geographical” borders, having risen above the restricted space defined by the walls and corridors of its one-time building-complex. The “Bolyai University” in our days has become the symbol of independent, state-financed Transylvanian Hungarian higher education on the whole. The symbol of the “Bolyai University” comprises today practically all the unfulfilled claims, demands, needs and desires that the Transylvanian Hungarian community strives for in connection with its own higher education. In so far as this is true, the question arises how, by which means and according to what strategies this symbol can/must be filled with contents, in such a way as to create a vision that is based on the realities of domestic Romanian and Hungarian higher education, on the realities of Romanian and Hungarian politics, and at the same time based on the pragmatics of construction. As for ourselves – taking into account the main topoi in the social-professional publicity of the past more than two decades –, with respect to the achievement of the independent, full-spectrum Hungarian language higher education, we basically consider three possibilities, three strategic “visions” worth examining: the thought of the re-establishment of a public university that would be the successor of the independent

“Bolyai University” dissolved in 1959; the issues of the Romanian public funding of the independent private university network (i.e. the university system represented by the four locations where the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania and the Partium Christian University operate); and finally the possibility of a looser-tighter alliance and common interest representation of the existing – public and private – actors of Hungarian language university education in Romania (the “Consortium” Principle). In the discourse about the strategy and vision of Hungarian language higher education in Romania, two other concepts have been formulated recently that we consider very unrealistic, primarily because they lack expedience and pragmatism. One of these is the thought of a new independent university to be established in addition to the already existing ones, which seems a rather questionable strategy given the fact that the mere accreditation procedure of new higher education institutions in Romania is rather lengthy, lasting at least ten years of time. The other idea would transfer the Hungarian section from within the Babeş-Bolyai University to the Sapientia-PCE network, in which case there would be a strong risk of losing the per capita normative funding presently provided by the Romanian State for the academic programmes carried out in the Hungarian language.

We consider that the thought of a “Bolyai University” in Cluj (Kolozsvár) as an independent Hungarian university seceding from the present Babeş-Bolyai University by the division of its existing structure, personnel, fellowship and assets lacks realistic chances today, for at least four reasons. One the one hand, ever since the moments of the changes in 1989 there has practically never been a determined and true political will on the side of the Romanian power that would have made the re-establishment of the former “Bolyai University” or the return of the confiscated and nationalised possessions, buildings, and assets possible in the first place. Concerning the latter ones – jointly with or irrespective of the “university issue” – the Hungarian community in Transylvania must continue to uphold the demand and claim for legal remedy. Chances for the establishment of an independent university by “division” are further diminished by the fact that even the teaching staff of the Hungarian section of the BBU has been lacking an adequate consensus with regard to that solution: both the idea of separation, of independence by

secession from the university and the will to maintain the present status quo have many devotees and committed supporters within the Hungarian section, and this lack of consensus undoubtedly weakens the opportunities to politically achieve “separation”. At the same time – being particularly aware of the objectives formulated by the Romanian leadership of the university – we must not forget that the “pullout” of the Hungarian section would practically make the main strategic aim of the BBU declared on several occasions (namely to become one of the largest multicultural higher education institutions in Central-Eastern Europe and in that respect a success story, an example to follow) hollow and trifling. Lastly, a fourth reason that makes an independent Hungarian university born from the BBU unrealistic is the significantly changed context of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education that has developed over the past ten years, the coming into existence of the PCE and of the SU, with a continuously enlarged number of students and extended programme spectrum.

Obviously, under such circumstances, the significance of the Transylvanian Hungarian private university network has gradually increased, and today it can be asserted with more and more determination that the institutional system of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania and the Partium Christian University may become an important pillar of an autonomous university under the administration of the Transylvanian Hungarian community. The establishment of the two universities as independent legal entities seems to successfully lift the issue of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education from the plane of unrealistic objectives, and the best argument for this latter statement is that the Romanian Law on Education adopted in 2011 does not include the possibility to establish a separate Hungarian public university (it only talks about multicultural universities, allowing only Hungarian faculties at best), making the establishment of an independent institution possible only if founded by a foundation or by the churches. We hold therefore that the existence, development, and support of the Partium Christian University and the Sapientia HUT, both of them having final accreditation, is of decisive importance from the point of view of Hungarian national policy, the primary aim of which must be to counteract against the effects of the several decade long Romanian oppressive national policy strategy, and to

alleviate the economic and cultural backwardness of the Hungarian regions and the Hungarian population. It may not sound very positive, yet today it is undoubtedly true: the private university network with Hungarian language teaching, following Hungarian traditions and identity, managed by autonomous ruling bodies (the Senate and the Board of Trustees) that are independent from central state power and funding, placed under the protection and supervision of the Hungarian historic churches, represent the sole higher education system of institutions in Romania, which can safeguard the necessary conditions and guarantees for our national policy objectives to be fulfilled.

In addition to their mission of education, training and formation of identity, the faculties of the private university network placed at different geographic locations also follow other, decisively important strategic objectives. The Faculty in Tg. Mureş of the Sapientia HUT for instance is also aimed to counterweight the effects of the change in population proportions that occurred at the turn of year 2000 (the Romanian population slightly exceeding 50%); the establishment of the faculties in Miercurea Ciuc aim to contribute to the educational, cultural, economic development of the primarily Hungarian-inhabited area; and the Cluj-based centre of the university, respectively its faculty in this town are a symbol of “not giving up” the town that has always been the traditional spiritual centre of the Transylvanian Hungarian community, while at the same time, the existence of an independent Hungarian higher education institution in the town is of strategic importance also from the perspective of counterbalancing Romanian national policy aspirations¹⁰.

In consequence another alternative for the establishment of the state-funded, independent Hungarian university is usually also formulated in the latter context. By the accreditation of the Partium Christian University and of the Sapientia University, the formal conditions for a possible support from the Romanian State are fulfilled as stipulated by the law (the Romanian State *may* provide funding for private universities functioning on its territory within the national system of education). Such a situation would not be without precedent in Europe, as the Åbo Akademi University in Turku followed a similar trajectory (becoming a public institution in 1981, after six decades of existence

as a private entity), but the Free University of Bolzano (Bozen) also functions with mixed funding (in this case the funding legislation of 1997 declared the establishment of a private entity, where the state contributes to cover the expenses of education and research). The present private university network functioning with support from the Hungarian budget must undoubtedly formulate its claims for Romanian state support, given the fact that it takes over public tasks of education, yet an indirect and truly problematic result of such a claim could be the appearance of a “discriminatory” treatment among private universities in Romania: on what grounds could the Romanian State provide support to the Hungarian private universities, while denying it from other private institutions functioning on its territory? In this context domestic state support could only be feasible or realistic if the Sapientia-PCE system was conferred some sort a “special” status by the Romanian State, recognising the fact that the institutions undertake public tasks related to the full-spectrum education in the mother tongue of the Hungarian minority in Romania. On the other hand the legal-normative conditions for such a solution are rather deficient and vague, and it is also true that the Romanian political elite at present is quite determined in not considering any kind of state funding for the Hungarian private university network. The feasibility of this scenario of establishing an independent, state-funded Hungarian university is made even more difficult by the question how in this case the public tasks undertaken by the existing Hungarian sections of public universities and those undertaken by the also partly publicly funded private university network would relate to each other? Or approaching the issue in a different way: by what algorithm and by what institutional division would the Romanian budget fund a full-spectrum of academic programmes perceived as a *onetime* obligation toward minority taxpayers? A third alternative of the independent Hungarian university can also be formulated as an intermediary, mixed solution, yet which may be faster, and easier to achieve. The question or proposal put in simple terms is the following: would it not be practical to “assemble” the independent Hungarian university in Romania (i.e. all we mean by the symbol of the “Bolyai University”) from our existing higher education institutions, as a network? We envisage a consortium-type co-operation based on a looser-tighter alliance, in which the main partakers would be the institutions engaged in higher

education in Hungarian, the ones appearing in the table presented earlier: the Hungarian section of the BBU, the SU, the PCE, the Hungarian sections of the TGMUA and of the MPUTGM, the PTI. Such a union or network would practically yield an (almost) full-spectrum Transylvanian university, both geographically – from Oradea (Nagyvárad) to Miercurea Ciuc (Csíkszereda) – and from the point of view of the academic programmes, in other words the entirety of the symbol, or the demand of the “Bolyai University” as we mean it today. In addition to the almost complete programme offer in Hungarian and the comprehensive territorial or geographic span, such a university union would undoubtedly have the advantage that the institutions existing today would be obliged to develop their common strategy, it would lead to a much stronger “lobby power” and a better representation of the specific problems of higher education in Hungarian, and not the least, it would create the setting for the joint request of Romanian state funding for an integrated institutional system, which provides higher education in the mother tongue (and thus performs public duties). It is important to stress that such a co-operation (or union) could help in adjusting to each other the different, publicly declared or silently enforced independent strategies of the various institutions existing today, in formulating a relatively uniform Transylvanian Hungarian vision on higher education – and furthermore, this could happen while the independence of the different institutions working together within the consortium would remain intact.

Obviously this solution has also got its question marks and practical difficulties. Thus for instance, the Hungarian sections within the presently existing public universities would certainly need more decision power and autonomy regarding their functioning, so as to permit them to become a “contracting partner” in a higher education alliance on a Transylvanian level. At the same time the academic communities and the leaders of the institutions participating in such a consortium, will effectively have to assume the meaning and the realisation of such a vision of the Hungarian higher education in Transylvania – even if at times the narrow institutional interests and strategies of the partnering institutions will have to be sacrificed for the sake of a common interest.

NOTAS

¹ In 2010 the author had already dedicated a comprehensive study to this Transylvanian higher education policy/social sciences subject matter (“Present and Future of Higher Education in the Hungarian Language in Romania”, *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae Europaeae et Regionalis Studii*, Vol. I, 2010/2, 149-160.), the present text tries to formulate new, unpublished statements, based on more recent statistical data and analyses, in harmony with the spirit and the final conclusions of that treatise.

² Several comprehensive works have been written recently about the history and national political significance of Romanian (Transylvanian) Hungarian language higher education, e.g.: Balázs Sándor et al., *Fehér Könyv az erdélyi magyar felsőoktatás kálváriájáról* (White book about the tribulations of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education), Kolozsvár, Bolyai Egyetem Barátainak Egyesülete, 2009, 239.; Gaál György, *Egyetem a Farkas utcában: A kolozsvári Ferenc József Tudományegyetem előzményei, korszakai és vonzatai* (University on Farkas Street: antecedents, periods, and results), Kolozsvár, Scientia Kiadó, 2012. 428. Other unquestionable reference works about university history: Bisztrai Gyula; Szabó T. Attila; Tamás Lajos (ed.), *Erdély magyar egyeteme* (The Hungarian university of Transylvania), Kolozsvár, Erdélyi Tudományos Intézet, 1941., and *A kolozsvári m.k. Ferencz József Tudomány Egyetemnek Emlékkönyve* (Memorial volume of the Royal Hungarian Franz Joseph University), Budapest, Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi Magyar Királyi Ministerium, 1903. 418. The 2009-2010 edition of the Almanach of Hungarians in Romania also dedicated a comprehensive thematic block to the history of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education and its national policy mission. (Temesvár-Kolozsvár, Diaszpóra Alapítvány-Sapientia EMTE, 2011, 730.)

³ According to the results of a survey done on a group of students studying in MA programmes in Cluj, between March and June 2010, 71.2% of the respondents thought that BSc programmes transfer general knowledge (Research entitled “The Opinion and Experience on the Higher Education Programmes among the Masters' Students in Kolozsvár”, authors: Geambaşu Réka, Szabó Júlia, Kiss Zita, Székely Tünde. Some of the published results: Székely Tünde; Tonk Márton, “Politica educațională în Uniunea Europeană. Impactul și consecințele Procesului Bologna asupra programelor de masterat la universitățile clujene”, *Colloquium Politicum*, Vol. II., 2011/1, 49-70.

⁴ The data for the report was collected in October-November 2012, by means of a direct poll addressed to the concerning higher education institutions. The author hereby wishes to thank for the helpful co-operation of the leaders of the Hungarian sections of

the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj (Kolozsvár) and of the Medical and Pharmaceutical University of Tg. Mureş (Marosvásárhely), the Tg. Mureş (Marosvásárhely) University of Art and the Partium Christian University of Oradea (Nagyvárad), respectively of the officials of the secretariats at the Protestant Theological Institute (Cluj-Kolozsvár) and the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Kolozsvár), including for their correct and undistorted data supply

⁵ According to the results of the census in 2011 88.59% of the population of Romania are Romanians, 6.50% are ethnic Hungarians, 3.25% are Roma, from a total number of 19,042,936 citizens. In connection with the latter figure, several demographic studies called the attention upon the fact that the 2011 census showed a “decrease of the population by 2.6 million people since the previous census, which is unparalleled in the modern history of the state, but also on a European scale.” (Kiss Tamás, “A 2011-es romániai népszámlálás tanulságai és következményei” (The lessons and consequences of the 2011 census), *Pro Minoritate*, 2012/autumn, 10.)

⁶ Salat Levente et al., “Az erdélyi magyar felsőoktatás helyzete és kilátásai” (The situation and prospects of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education), in [Szikszai Mária (ed)], *Az erdélyi magyar felsőoktatás helyzete és kilátásai* (The situation and prospects of Transylvanian Hungarian higher education), Kolozsvár, Ábel Kiadó – MTA Kolozsvári Területi Bizottsága, 2010, 9-126.

⁷ Research results published: Márton János, “A 2009-ben és 2010-ben érettségizett romániai magyar diákok továbbtanulása” (The continuation of studies of 2009 and 2010 Hungarian secondary school graduates in Romania), *Educatio* 2012/1, 87-103.

⁸ In connection to this see the previously mentioned survey, and the following studies: Papp Z. Attila, “Kisebbségi magyarok oktatási részvételének értelmezési lehetőségei” (Interpretation possibilities of the Hungarian minority's participation in education), *Educatio*, 2012/1, 3-23., respectively Berács József; Malota Erzsébet, “Megéri hozzánk jönni tanulni?” (Is it worth coming to study with us?), *Educatio* 2011/2, 221-234.

⁹ Being aware of the fact that such opinions and evaluations could touch upon sensitive spots today, the author of the present study considers it important to remark that his diagnosis had not been formulated as one of an “external observer”, but of a participant in the debates on the future status of the Hungarian section, as well as based on the experiences gathered as a full-time teaching staff of the BBU between the years of 1996-2006.

¹⁰ On the foundation of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, respectively on its mission summarised above see: Bakacsi Gyula et al. “Per aspera ad astra – Az EMTE első öt éve” (Per aspera ad astra – the first five years of Sapientia HUT), *Magyar Kisebbség* 2006/1-2, 22-44.