

NGO-s
AGAINST
BENEŠ DECREES

JULY 20, 1945

Several thousand deported Hungarians before death by starvation in the Pozsony-Ligetfalu Czechoslovak internment camp.

The letter of the president of the World Federation of Hungarians to the President of the Hungarian Red Cross, asking for urgent action to stave off the starvation death of the interned Hungarians.

World Federation of Hungarians
No. 498/1945.

The Reverend Dr. Andor Szentiványi
Bishopric Vicar
President of the Hungarian Red Cross

My Dear Friend,

We have countless visitors daily, from Czechoslovakia, who are seeking refuge in Hungary, to avoid deportation, by the authorities.

They are telling horrendous stories of the Pozsonyligetfalu Concentration camp. The inmates of the camp are supposed to be fed by the Czechoslovakian Red Cross, but receiving daily ration of only two cups of sugarless coffee and one bowl of soup, without cooking oil or lard.

At the same time, the authorities made it impossible to obtain food from the outside. I have consulted the Office of the Prime Minister and also with Ms. Anna Kéthly. As the result of these consultations, we could think of only one solution:

Would you please propose to the Czechoslovak Red Cross to supply adequate food to the camp at the expense of the Hungarian Red Cross. I am aware that at the present there are no money allocated for this purpose, but I have reason to believe, that the Prime Minister's office is willing to provide the necessary funds.

I am willing to take moral responsibility, that for the lack of budgeted funds this proposal will not be denied, but it is necessary to have an agreement with the Czechoslovakian Red Cross, as soon as possible.

The lives of thousands of persons are at stakes, therefore we can do the financing concurrently with the negotiations with the Slovaks.

I thrust in your generosity, determination, perseverance and the enthusiasm for this noble cause, that you are going to initiate these steps today.

Yours truly
Tivadar Ács
President of the World Federation of Hungarians.

Location of document:
National Archives, XXVIII-J-2-MVSZ
47/b item, Polgári Demokrata Párt – 615/1945, Container 195

OCTOBER 11, 1945

**Excerpts from a letter by the
President of the World Federation of Hungarians
to the Leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party**

To the Leaders of the Party,

The recent declaration of Mr. Eduard Beneš, the President of the Czechoslovak Republic, in which he had aligned himself with the policy of the Slovakian National Council, presents a clear picture.

After this declaration, the foreign policy of Hungary will have to be changed. Now, it is obvious, that Mr. Beneš wants to get rid of Hungarians of Czechoslovakia and all hopes are dashed for the dampening influence of Bohemia, that is, the Central Government of Prague on Slovakia bringing about the compromise between the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian points of view.

It seems, even the Allied Nations are getting closer to accept minorities-free borders to ensure the peace in Europe. We believe, the Hungarian foreign policy should be changed to demand ethnic borders.

We are asking the leadership of your esteemed Party-Leadership to influence our government, to sharply condemn the persecution the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, and ask the Allied Nations to demand the cessation of these activities.

October 11. 1945

Yours truly

Tivadar Ács
President
World Federation of Hungarians

National Archives, XXVIII-J. MVSZ
47/B item – Rajk László, 984/1945, Boks 195

II REPORT

On the 15th of November 1945, the MVSZ reported to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that Hungarians deported from Czechoslovakia coming to their offices. These unfortunate persons are reporting in about the atrocities they had to endure. They are offering detailed descriptions of the methods used to annihilate the Hungarians and deprive them of their properties.

The MVSZ sent the 74 case histories of the refugees to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister.

(OLXXVIII-J-2-MVSZ, 47/b item KÜM-1945/47-1175/1945 and 1096/1945, Boks 188)

On the 15th of November 1945, The World Federation of Hungarians sent the following Appeal for distribution to the Hungarian News Service (MTI)

APPEAL

to the Hungarians expelled from Czechoslovakia

The World Federation of Hungarians (Budapest, VI, 7 Eötvös Street) asking the persons expelled from Czechoslovakia to report the circumstances of their expulsion. If can not do it in person, send a detailed written report to the address above – in their own interest.

A list of possessions left behind should be also reported to: Népgondozó Hivatal (Welfare Office), Budapest V, 12 Sass Street, or to your local City Hall.

See: 8150/1945 ME Order of Council.

Signed:

Tivadar Ács
President
World Federation of Hungarians

National Archives
XXVIII-J-2-MVSZ, Item 47/b, „M” lettercode, MTI, 1174/1945, Container 191

APRIL 29, 1946

Excerpts from a letter
of the World Federation of Hungarians
to János Gyöngyösi, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Dear Minister,

We have received reports from Pozsony (Bratislava), yesterday. These reports state, that after the address delivered in Békéscsaba by deputy Prime Minister Mátyás Rákosi, the Czechoslovak authorities launched a wave of unbridled terror, against the autochthon Hungarians.

In Pozsony they have marshalled masses of Slovak demonstrators. The fanatised mob brutalised the Hungarians of the city. Severely beat them up, vandalised their homes, then marched to the city jail and for hours chanted slogans glorifying the Nazi inmates Tiso and Mach Sanyo (Fascist Prime Minister and Minister resp.).

Therefore, the World Federation of Hungarians is greatly concerned about this Citadel of European Fascism: Slovakia. It appears, that the ideas of Tiso and Mach is alive and surging to the surface in strength, to compromise the efforts to achieve peace on Earth. (...)

As we see the behaviour of the Czechoslovakian Government, serves not the cause of making peace between the Hungary and Czechoslovakia and there is a definite lack of sincerity on their part.

With deep respect, we are turning to the Prime Minister for help. Please convey our request to the Allied Control Commission to investigate our statements to ascertain, that our concerns are valid. (...)
Budapest, April 29, 1945

Sincerely yours

Tivadar Ács
National Archives, XXVIII-J-2.
47/b. item KÜM 1945-47, Boks 950/1946

MAGYAROK
VILÁGSZÖVETSÉGE

Elnök

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Ej.: 2002/0038.b

OPEN LETTER TO GÜNTER VERHEUGEN

Dear Mr. Verheugen, High Commissioner:

The World Federation of Hungarians, which is active in more than fifty countries, was very shocked to learn of the manner in which you support the concept of collective guilt. We believe that this concept, which could be called the shame of the twentieth century, can no longer be accepted in the twenty-first century, when Europe is pursuing a policy of integration. The lowest point in modern history was the horror of Nazism and Bolshevism which originated from this same basic concept of collective guilt. By applying this concept, certain races, ethnic groups and social classes were judged to be guilty and pernicious and as such, condemned to be erased. The Beneš Decrees of Czechoslovakia declared the German and Hungarian minorities to be enemies and collectively guilty. Laws were passed to take away all the rights of these communities. Their land and property were confiscated; they were subjected to forceful deportation or simply expelled from their homeland. They were denied the right to physical existence in their territories and almost annihilated. According to the decrees, every atrocity was allowed and practiced. The well-known Czech historian, Petr Placák, in the Prague daily newspaper, *Lidové Noviny*, on February 4, 2002, writes that Beneš, as the Head of State, applying the decrees which we are opposing: "essentially effected the annihilation or

extermination of those minorities judged to be collectively guilty. This was noted by the UN agreement of Dec. 9, 1948." Several million people, who were victims of the ethnic cleansing as the decrees came into effect, between 1945 and 1948, to this day have not received any compensation.

Mr. Verheugen, your statement that the Beneš decrees do not apply to the Union, because they came into effect before the existence of the Union is incorrect. Your point of view would be questioned even if these decrees were no longer in effect. If this were so, several million Germans and several hundred thousand Hungarians who were sacrificed would have no chance of compensation. This brings up very serious questions of honor. It is not accidental that Edmund Stoiber, the president of Bavaria, CDU/CSU candidate for chancellor, condemns you when he declares that the Beneš decrees are: "an open wound on the body of Europe". According to Mr. Stoiber, this inadmissible "short-sighted mentality" reflects your misleading point of view.

Mr. Verheugen, the effects of the Beneš decrees cannot be discounted because, after the change of regime, they remained in effect and they are the source of the Slovak laws which discriminate against the minorities' rights. Therefore, *de jure*, the members of the Hungarian minority are at present secondary citizens in Slovakia. *De facto*, the laws serve the discriminatory practice of law – particularly in the area of the return of the confiscated lands. (Documentation attached) How can we put an end to such discrimination, when the reason for it still exists and is continually reinforced? Hitler's orders to exterminate existed before the formation of the present United Germany and we cannot envision that they would be included in Germany's present code of laws. How do you explain your acceptance of the Beneš Decrees? According to this reasoning, Germany could be a member of the European Union, even if she had laws — *ad absurdum* — declaring the French to be enemies of the German people. Compare to the Beneš Decrees which declare the Hungarians and Germans to be enemies of the Czechs and Slovaks. Your stand on this brings into question matters which are beyond the economic interests, and which would affect countries who wish to become members of the European Union. Your statement that the Beneš Decrees could be accepted shakes

our faith in the constitutionality of the Union, which is built on equal rights and equal opportunity for all people in Europe. In the European Union the meaning of the term "harmony of law", does not apply to the small laws or regulations, for example the standardization of the amount and quality of the agrarian harvest, but to the creation of the actual paradigm of democracy and constitutionality, which all members are bound to accept. This guarantees that on our continent there will no longer be disadvantageous differences between countries. The stress caused by injustice will be dissolved and the principle of fairness will rule. This is the message sent by the United Nations Assembly in 1948 in its Declaration of Universal Human Rights. The Beneš Decrees which you accept violate every point of this Declaration.

Mr. Verheugen, we ask you to contemplate on these matters, study the impact of the inhumane Beneš Decrees which are still in effect today, and be aware of the moral consequences of these Decrees and the danger which they entail.

Mr. Verheugen, the World Federation of Hungarians expects you to demand, immediately, that the Czech Republic and Slovakia rescind the Beneš Decrees.

In the name of the World Federation of Hungarians,

Miklós Patrubby, President
Zoltán Király, Vice-President
Imre Borbély, Regional President
Tibor Léh, Regional President

Budapest, 23-rd of February 2002.

MAGYAROK VILÁGSZÖVETSÉGE

Elnök

WORLD FEDERATION OF HUNGARIANS
President
WELTBUND DER UNGARN
Präsident



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Ej.: 2002/0038

Offener Brief an Günter Verheugen

Herr Kommissar, geehrter Herr Günter Verheugen!

Der Weltbund der Ungarn, mit Teilverbänden in über fünfzig Ländern, nahm Ihre tolerante Einstellung gegenüber dem Prinzip der Kollektivschuld mit Betroffenheit zur Kenntnis. Wir dachten, dass ein Weiterleben dieser zur Recht als Schande des XX Jahrhunderts genannten Rechtsauffassung im vereinten Europa des XXI Jahrhunderts unannehmbar wäre.

Die absoluten Tiefpunkte der neueren Geschichte – die Greueltaten des Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus – wurzeln in ein und demselben Rechtsprinzip, dem der Kollektivschuld. Gemäss dieses Prinzips wurden Rassen, Ethnien und Gesellschaftsklassen als sündig und schädlich abgestempelt, und schliesslich der „Endlösung“ preisgegeben.

Die Dekrete des Präsidenten Edward Beneš verhängten rechtlich die Kollektivschuld über die deutsche und ungarische Minderheit der Tschechoslowakei. Die Dekrete verordnen die totale Entrechtung und Enteignung der Angehörigen dieser Volksgruppen, als auch deren gewaltsamen Umsiedlung, Vertreibung und die teilweise physische Vernichtung. Nach dem Inkrafttreten der Verordnungen wurden all diese Greueltaten an die genannten Minderheiten auch begangen. Petr Placák, der angesehene tschechische Geschichtswissenschaftler schrieb am 4 Februar 2002 in der prager Zeitung Lidové Noviny, dass die Tätigkeit des Präsidenten Beneš und dessen Dekrete „den Tatbestand der Volksvernichtung voll ausschöpfen, so wie dieses Verbrechen in der Vereinbarung der Vereinten Nationen am 9 December 1948 definiert ist“. Die ethnische Säuberung die gemäss der

Dekrete an Deutsche und Ungarn verübt wurde, betraf Opfer in Millionen-höhe. Bis zum heutigen Tag wurde niemand entschädigt, wurde keine Wiedergutmachung an die überlebenden Angehörigen der Massenmorde versucht.

Herr Kommissar, Ihr Erklärungsversuch, wonach die Dekrete nicht die Europäische Union betreffen, da diese vor der Geburt der Union entstanden sind, ist in keiner Weise überzeugend. Dieser Standpunkt bestünde auch dann nicht, wenn die Dekrete schon ausser Kraft gestellt wären – würde doch dieser Kommissarswort den berechtigten Anspruch auf Wiedergutmachung und Entschädigung zunichte tun. Das wirft schwerwiegende moralische Probleme auf. Nicht zu unrecht nennt Edmund Stoiber die Dekrete eine „Wunde Europas“ und wirft Ihnen wegen Ihres rechtlichen Verschleierversuches unangebrachte „Schlussstrichmentalität“ vor.

Herr Kommissar! Man kann keinen Schlussstrich unter die Beneš-Dekrete tun, weil diese auch nach dem Sturz des Kommunismus unverändert in Kraft sind, und der slowakischen ethno-diskriminativen Rechts-schaffung als Rechtsquelle dienen. Wegen dieser Dekrete sind die Angehörigen der ungarischen Minderheit auch heute noch Staatsbürger zweiter Klasse. De facto dienen die Dekrete auch der diskriminierenden Rechtsausübung als Fundament – besonders auf dem Gebiet der Rückgabe der Agrarböden (Dokumentation im Anhang). Wie ist es möglich Schlussstrich unter Spätfolgen einer Diskrimination zu ziehen, dessen Ursache weiter besteht und die Diskrimination ständig neu erschafft? Auch die mörderischen Verordnungen Hitlers sind vor dem Entstehen der Europäischen Union entstanden, doch ist deren Gültigkeit im Rechtswesen Unions-Deutschlands nicht vorstellbar. Wie können Sie Ihr Verschleierversuch hier anwenden? Könnte nach Ihrer Meinung Deutschland Unionsland geworden sein wenn ad absurdum ein Gesetz von früher die Franzosen als Feinde deklariert hätte – so wie es die Dekrete des Edward Beneš im Falle der Deutschen und Ungarn tun!?

Herr Kommissar! Ihr Standpunkt betreffs der Beneš-Verordnungen lässt alles anzweifeln, was den Anschluss an die Europäische Union über dem blanken Materiellen hinaus motivieren könnte. Die Akzeptanz der Kollektivschuld lässt den Glauben daran ins Schwanken geraten, dass die

Union wahrhaftig aufgrund des Rechtsstaates, der Recht- und Chancengleichheit ein gemeinsames Heim für die Völker des Kontinents erbaut.

Der Sinn für die Rechtsharmonisierung Europas ergibt sich mitnichten aus der unionweiten Standardisierung der Massen- und Qualitätsmerkmale, beispielsweise von Agrarprodukten – das bedarf nur allgemein gültigen Regeln. Der paradigmatische Sinn der Rechtsharmonisierung besteht in der allgemeinen Implementierung von Demokratie und Rechtsstaat: die Garantie dafür, dass auf unserem Kontinent die Diskriminierung aufhört und die Ungerechtigkeit und die sich daraus ergebenden Spannungen verringern und sich das Fairnessprinzip durchsetzt. Das ist auch die tiefere Botschaft der Universellen Menschenrechts-Proklamation der Vereinten Nationen dessen buchstäblich alle Paragraphen von den mehr als 80 Dekreten des Edward Beneš in schwerster Weise verletzt werden.

Herr Kommissar! Wir bitten Sie all das zu bedenken und die Tragweite der Gültigkeit dieser meschenverachtenden Dekrete zu erwägen: die moralische Last die sie verkörpern und die Gefahr die daraus entsteht.

Herr Kommissar, der Weltbund der Ungarn erwartet von Ihnen, dass Sie Tschechien und die Slowakische Republik dazu auffordern, dass sie die Dekrete des Edward Beneš unverzüglich ausser Kraft setzen.

Im Namen des Weltbundes der Ungarn,

Patrubány Miklós, Präsident
Király Zoltán, Vize-Präsident
Borbély Imre, Regionalpräsident
Léh Tibor, Regionalpräsident

MAGYAROK VILÁGSZÖVETSÉGE

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WORLD FEDERATION OF HUNGARIANS <i>President</i>		H - 1068 BUDAPEST, BENCZÜR U. 15. TEL.: [00-36-1 / 06-1] 351-7951 FAX / TEL.: [00-36-1/06-1] 322-9817 e-mail: elnok@mvsz.hu
WELTBUND DER UNGARN <i>Präsident</i>		

Ej:2002.0759

**The Honorable
Patrick Cox,**
Speaker of the
European Parliament

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your attention and time you have devoted to the question of the Beneš Decrees, especially for taking the pain to establish the Legal Consulting Body to investigate this issue. This case is very important for the Hungarian community in Slovakia and her members exiled all over the World.

The World Federation of Hungarians, an NGO active in some 50 countries of the World, was involved with the problem of the Beneš Decrees and their effects since 1945. The archives of our Federation saved a large number of documents. The leadership of the Federation already in the 40-s brought into the attention of the World community, the International Red Cross, many countries and their respective governments, the horrors inflicted on the Hungarian community by those laws and regulations, as well as the atrocities committed.

In the past two years, it came to our attention that the discussion about the Beneš Decrees by different entities of the European Union concerned the Czech Republic, only. However, they have affected and still affect the Hungarian community of Slovakia, too. This is why, our Federation be-

came involved and jointly with other human rights organizations started to organize open hearings, seminars and forums. We have informed members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Brussels and on site in Slovakia, to focus the attention on the effects of the Beneš Decrees on the Hungarian community.

Following this we were startled to hear that on October 21, 2002 the special session of the Foreign Relations Committee in Strasbourg, dedicated to the issue of the Beneš Decrees will deal with the Czech Republic, only. We were taken by surprise by some legal opinions as well, tolerating such infamous measures. Our conviction is that the question of the decrees should be also discussed in relations to Slovakia, because those measures are victimizing the Hungarian community even today.

How can be proven that the Beneš Decrees are still in effect in 2002? This is easy to do:

In 1945 properties of the Hungarians have been confiscated based on those laws. The confiscated property was distributed to Slovak, Slavic settlers. When the communists have implemented their collectivization policy, those properties were taken away from the Slavic settlers. Following the fall of the communist system Slovakia initiated laws that are "restituting" the confiscated property and making into owners - the former Slavic settlers?! One can rightfully ask: Why wasn't the property restituted to the original Hungarian owners, who have been robbed by the Beneš Decree confiscation process? The answer is evident: Because the Beneš Decrees are still in effect and they are taking their victims on the daily basis in 2002!

Dear Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the evidence given is self-explanatory. However, I am enclosing a professional legal analysis by Dr. jur. Alíz Bődök, published for the seminar held on June 24th, 2002 in Brussels at the EP, demonstrating the same evidence. Attached also, please find the letter of our Federation to High Commissioner Günter Verheugen pointing at the non-tenability of the Beneš Decrees.

The White Book of the World Federation of Hungarians demonstrating the fact that the Beneš Decrees are still victimizing the society nowadays, will be available in Brussels for the Respected Members of the EP, next week.

Having faith in your commitment to justice, democracy and high ethical standards, please use your authority to eliminate the inhuman Beneš Decrees, the "amnesty law" in Slovakia, before her accession to the European Union.

Sincerely Yours,

Patrubány Miklós
President,
World Federation of Hungarians

Budapest, 17th of October, 2002.

MAGYAROK
VILÁGSZÖVETSÉGE

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WELTBUND DER UNGARN Präsident		

Ej:2002.0760

Mr. Elmar Brok

Chairman, EP Foreign Relations Committee
Brussels

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your attention and time you have devoted to the question of the Beneš Decrees and the connected problems so far. These issues are very important for the Hungarian community in Slovakia and her members exiled all over the World.

The World Federation of Hungarians, an NGO active in some 50 countries of the World, was involved with the problem of the Beneš Decrees and their effects since 1945. The archives of our Federation saved a large number of documents. The leadership of the Federation already in the 40-s brought into the attention of the World community, the International Red Cross, many countries and their respective governments, the horrors inflicted on the Hungarian community by those laws and regulations, as well as the atrocities committed.

In the past two years, it came to our attention that the discussion about the Beneš Decrees by different entities of the European Union concerned the Czech Republic, only. However, they have affected and still affect the Hungarian community of Slovakia, too. This is why, our Federation became involved and jointly with other human rights organizations started to organize open hearings, seminars and forums. We have informed members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Brussels and on site in Slovakia, to focus the attention on the effects of the Beneš Decrees on the Hungarian community.

Following this we were startled to hear that on October 21, 2002 the special session of the Foreign Relations Committee in Strasbourg,

dedicated to the issue of the Beneš Decrees will deal with the Czech Republic, only.

We are fully convinced that the question of the decrees should be also discussed in relations to Slovakia, because those measures are victimizing the Hungarian Community even today.

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Having faith in your commitment to justice, democracy and high ethical standards, please use your authority to eliminate the inhuman Beneš Decrees, the "amnesty law" in Slovakia, before her accession to the European Union.

Sincerely Yours,

Patrubány Miklós

President,

World Federation of Hungarians

Budapest, 17th of October, 2002.

**The European Free Alliance
Democratic Party of the Peoples of Europe**

List of participants

An the open hearing of Mr. Patrubby Miklós president of the World Federation of Hungarians and Mr. Gál Soóky László in the EU Parliament, Strasbourg 13th June. 2001.

The situation of the Hungarian Minority in the Slovak Republic:

On the road towards the EU

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**L'Alliance Libre Europeenne
Partie Democratique Des Peuples d'Europe**

La situation de la minorité hongroise dans la République Slovaque: envers L'union européenne.

Nelly Maes, présidente de L'ALE au Parlement européen, invite Miklós Patrubby le mercredi 13 juin pour un hearing dans le Parlement européen à Strasbourg.

Comme Président de la Fédération Mondiale hongroise il donnera d'information détaillée sur la situation des Hongrois dans les pays candidats et plus spécifique dans la République Slovaque.

3.5 million approximative d' Hongrois vivent en dehors de l' Hongrie. La plus grande communauté est enregistré en Transsylvanie (Roumanie) avec 2 millions et dans la République Slovaque 0.8 million d' Hongrois.

Les droits de cette minorité Hongroise sont une des éléments clef pour la stabilité en pays de L'Europe de l'Est l'Europe centrale. C'est pour ça que la minorité Hongroise mérite notre attention spéciale.

Nous expliqueront les brièvement les éléments clefs et les demandes de la minorité Hongroise dans la République Slovaque:

Que demande la population hongroise de Slovaquie?

Constatant que:

- Parmi les conditions d'adhésion à l'union européenne définies à Copenhague, figure l'examen de la qualité du traitement réservée aux communautés nationales minoritaires.
- Ces critères doivent être rencontrés par la Slovaquie, pays candidat à l'adhésion.
- Dans son dernier rapport datant du novembre de l'année dernière, la Commission estime qu'en Slovaquie, l'effort législatif à la protection des minorités est insuffisant et qu'il manque la mise en oeuvre de cette législation.

**MAGYAROK
VILÁGSZÖVETSÉGE**

Elnök

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WELTBUND DER UNGARN <i>Präsident</i>		

Ej: 2001/0245

**Open Hearing, European Parliament,
Strasbourg, 2001.06.13.**

The Hungarian Problem
Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin

*Chere Madame Président, Madame Nelly Maes,
Cheres Mesdames, Chers Messieurs,*

Je vous remercie, pour nous avoir invité et pour créer la possibilité de cette audition publique.

Notre séjour à Strasbourg se passe dans une période dans laquelle les négociations avec la Slovaquie se matérialisent dans le projet d'un nouveau rapport du Mr. Jan Marinus Wiersma. Nous sommes venus pour compléter ce rapport avec des informations importantes.

Let me introduce the organization I am representing and myself too.

The World Federation of Hungarians /WFH/ was founded 63 years ago, in 1938, by count Pál Teleki – later Prime Minister of Hungary – and baron Zsigmond Perényi, relative of Mr. János Perényi today ambassador of the Hungarian Republic in Strasbourg. The WFH is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, which acts independently from parties and governments.

Myself, I am 48 years old. I am living in Transylvania, part of Romania, in the capital of the region: Cluj-Kolozsvár-Klausenburg. I have been elected as president of the World Federation of Hungarians one year ago, in May 2000.

The WFH is present in every country, where Hungarians are living, that means in more than 50 countries. In approx. 40 countries, where Hungarian communities are considerable, the WFH is organized in so called National Councils. One

third of the Hungarian nation is living outside the borders of Hungary. Those five millions of Hungarians who are living outside Hungary are numerous in the countries neighbouring Hungary. In Slovakia, Ukraine, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia - in the Carpathian Basin - there are living approx. 3.5 millions of Hungarians, the two greatest communities being formed in Romania and Slovakia, adding together almost 3 millions of Hungarians.

Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin, didn't ever leave their homeland. After the World Wars of the 20-th century, borders moved over their heads, without calling for their agreement. In this way it is easy to understand, that these communities reject the title of *minorities*, but considering themselves *national communities*. All these national communities declared themselves members of the Hungarian nation. So we should recall, that Hungarians living in Slovakia or Romania are not Hungarian speaking Slovaks or Rumanians. They are Hungarians living in Slovakia and Hungarians living in Romania.

Excepting Slovenia - which considers Hungarians living in Slovenia as state-constituting co-nationals -, and partly Croatia, Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin, outside the borders of Hungary are struggling for their community rights. It would be easy for me to tell You lots of cases in each of these countries where the rights of these communities are violated. Instead, I'll better refere to only one aspect of each country.

In Transcarpathia, part of Ukraine everybody, who has been born prior to 1920, and who lived at least till 1990, became in an alternating way citizen of six states: Austro-Hungary, Slovakia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Soviet Union, Ukraine. He or she succeeded to do that, without ever leaving the village where he or she had been born.

In Yugoslavia, the post-Milosevic regime, still defends borders, in a way which reminds communist times. In April 2001, Mr. Imre Borbély, president of the Carpathian Region of the World Federation of Hungarians, was forbidden to enter into Yugoslavia, only because he had with him thirty copies of two well known Hungarian periodicals: Magyar Kisebbség /Hungarian Minority/, and Kapu /The Gate/.

Last but not least, let's take the case of Rumania. When Rumania asked for the access into the Council of Europe, the country wasn't prepared to be accepted. However, due to political reasons the Council of Europe accepted Rumania, while imposing some *recommendations*

in its document no. *1993/176*. This document recommended, among else, that Rumania should restitute church properties confiscated by communists. Four years later, because nothing happened meanwhile, the Council of Europe called Rumania in its *decision* no. *1997/1123*, to restitute church properties „in integrum”. Now we are in 2001. And from those more than 1200 buildings /specially schools/ which belonged to the Hungarian churches in Romania, there are no more than 3-4 which have been restituted after long years of trials. Meanwhile, during the last four years, the Hungarian Democratic Alliance of Rumania, was one of the governing parties of Rumania. The restitution of Hungarian church properties was one of the main goals, during its campaign!!?? The participation of the Hungarian party in the Government of Rumania did not solve the problems of the Hungarian community, but it allowed president Clinton, to declare Rumania a model in solving the minority problem!!!???

The key country of this hearing is Slovakia. I asked Mr. Gál Soóky László, president of the National Council of the WFH in Slovakia, to accompany me, and to give You direct, and true information regarding the situation of the Hungarian community in the Slovak Republic. Please listen to him.

....

After hearing these items of discrimination presented by Mr. President Gál Soóky, please allow me to make my conclusions.

The World Federation of Hungarians is totally interested that Slovakia should become member of the European Union as fast as possible. It is very difficult for all Hungarians to accept the idea that Hungary and the Hungarian communities living in the surrounding countries should be divided by Schengen borders. Therefore we are ready to support Slovakia in its attempt to join the EU as fast as possible. However it is hard to imagine Slovakia between the members of the European Union, a community of states respecting human rights, minority rights, until Slovakia is not willing to abolish the Presidential Decrees of Eduard Beneš, which decrees state guilty communities.

In the same way, it is hard to imagine Slovakia entering the European Union before accepting the rehabilitation of János Esterházy, the Hungarian party leader who was the only one Member of the Slovak Parliament, who voted against the so called Jewish law.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Europe should be aware that there exists a *Hungarian Question*, a problem which has been caused by Europe, and Europe has to solve this problem during the process of its integrating expansion. *Thank You for Your attention.*

László Gál Soóky

Fm. President

National Council of the WFH, in Slovakia

The discrimination of Hungarians in Slovakia

Open Hearing - European Parliament, Strasbourg, 2001.06.13.

Note: Since the issuance of this letter, some changes occurred, some in the wake of Mr. Soóky's present speech held at this open hearing. See notes.

When I received the draft of the Report on Slovakia from the European Parliament, I learned with sadness, that my previously raised opinions regarding the issues, do not need any revision or change, since the aforementioned document contains several obviously false assumptions, which essentially question the authenticity of the report.

Why is it, that this report can not stand as authentic before me?

The reason is, that you are addressed by a country, which even this days recognizes and uses the Presidential Decrees of Eduard Beneš from 1945, which being fully effective today maintain the principle of collective guilt, none acceptable by the international law, and thus are directed against basic human rights. I raise this issue, because it is necessary to warn you now when you in the European Parliament take decisions regarding Slovakia, and where there is great danger that the representatives of the European Parliament, based on false information, might take wrong decisions, which are against the international law.

Inasmuch as what I said is true, and it is true, than all the positive items constituting the draft of the report will apply to an integral part of the nation living in Slovakia, which, due to Eduard Beneš' Presidential Decrees to this very day are second-class citizens of the Slovak Republic, even today are war criminals and deprived of their rights. All the components of the draft concerning the Hungarians of Slovakia could only turn legitimate, if the Parliament of the Slovak Republic would withdraw the Decrees by law, the constitution of the Slovak Republic would grant the 600.000 Hungarians living in Slovakia the nation-constituting status and the president of the Slovak Republic would apologize the Hungarian citizens of Slovakia for the humiliations. Unless these acts will not happen, Slovakia can not be possibly reckoned among the democratic constitutional states.

The documents lying in front of us interestingly fail to mention three basic priorities concerning the Hungarians of Slovakia, that are: the Hungarian public education, culture and media in Slovakia. These are the three items of vital importance for the Hungarians torn away from the mother country.

Probably, the compilers of the report regard a question not mentioned, as not existing. But they exist indeed and there is a reason for the silence too.

These three items are the ones, where Slovakia does not comply with the UN Resolution on General Human Rights from 1948, having previously accepted it. What are the effects of this?

1. The public financial support which they are entitled to from the budget based on proportionality and what is directed by law and what also determines the amount.
2. The Hungarian teachers in Slovakia earn 15% less wage for the same work as their Slovak counterparts.
3. The Hungarian actors in Slovakia, due to the agreement of August 2000, are paid 20% less than the Slovak colleagues. (*Note: These are at par now, probably due to the airing of this problem.*)
4. The Hungarian media in Slovakia is evidently under influence of the Hungarian Coalition's Party, which censors, selects and in many cases disinform the public.
5. The language law, considered by many as exemplary, does not work in reality. If anybody present, or the compilers of the report shows me a single valid identity paper, or a death record, or vernacular extract, which besides in the official Slovakian also is in Hungarian, I shall withdraw my statement. Otherwise, not.
6. The Hungarians of Slovakia should, based on proportionality, should be granted on a constitutional basis the right to university. The Slovakian government agreed the opening of a single faculty, although it was aware of, that it does not possess the legal rights of doing this, since every university is independent of the government, following the principle of autonomous self-government.
7. It is true that the Slovak government, after having undertaken many modifications, has adopted the Charter of European Languages, but

the parliament did not ratify it so far, thus not being part of the Slovak legal system.

8. The administrative reform was granted major priority by the Slovak government. Among the two versions presented to parliament, none is containing a proposal that would grant on ethnical basis the territorial unity for the Hungarians, because there is no political wish for this within the government. (*Note: The Slovakian government enacted the plan of the ultra-nationalist former Prime Minister, Mr. Meciar, which is disastrous to the Hungarians. Instead of creating a larger administrative unit along the ethnic, economic and historic dividing lines, they have created a "vertical" district, mixing the two nations, therefore depriving the Hungarians of their political clout. The economic consequences of this arrangement is also disastrous.*)

In the draft I have found 11 points, where the compilers made their opinion on false and misleading information. If the European Parliament accepts this draft, it will be considered an active contributor, accomplice of an intrigue, what aims the assimilation of the Hungarians in Slovakia, and what for both parties could have tragic consequences.

Gyula Geönczeöl

President

National Council of the WFH in Slovakia

Forum and International Press Conference in Kéménd-Kamenin/Slovakia

The World Federation of Hungarians on April 4th, 2002 has organized an international press conference in the village of Kéménd in Slovakia. The scope of the event was the intolerability of the Beneš Decrees. No vacant seat remained at the conference hall of the convention center with some 300 seats in capacity. All seats and the standing room was occupied by formerly prosecuted people, who spoke out unanimously about the untenability of the Beneš Decrees. From the testimonies in Kéménd we became to know about unknown facts that have led to the never forgivable crimes - the mass murders. To the press conference joining the top leadership of the WFH arrived Mr. Miquel Mayol MP of the EP from France and countless radio and TV stations have been represented. A staff member of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung was present also. Mr. Miklós Patrubby, president of the WFH took the ethical and political responsibility for the event, and he has chaired the press conference for the entire three hours.

It is no question that the Kéménd press conference was probably the most significant event this year in the life of the WFH. The village of Kéménd, is located some 15 kilometers north from Párkány-Sturovo. The large number of some 300 old persons who came from the surrounding villages, were all survivors - without restitution. They are all a part of a group of some 60,000 persons from this formerly North Hungarian territory never comforted for those events. They are all, victims of the Beneš Decrees based on which, they have been deported into Bohemia. The press conference, which ended a period of some 55 years has touched down on questions have been regarded by some as "very sensitive", but helped to brake down an illegitimate "Wall of Silence".

Astonishingly enough, new, un-known tragedies were told in Kéménd. However, they justify the claim that the Beneš Decrees are not a "story of the past", the lawlessness didn't generate property related problems only, but their implications tower those problems over by their nature and by their magnitude.

Light was shed at two mass murders that have been committed against Hungarians in Slovakia and Bohemia in times when World War II was over for a long time.

In the vicinity of Pozsony, now Bratislava and just across the Danube river in Pozsony-Ligetfalu, now Petržalka 90 Székely scouts have been shot into trenches that remained behind from the wartime. According to the witnesses the victims have been young Székely boys from Csík county (Transsylvania). They all have possessed International Red Cross papers and they were directed to go home. At the end of the fourteens, this act of mass murder and crime against humanity was partially discussed publicly in Czechoslovakia, however, since then, deep silence was brought over of the case. In the seventies, some Hungarian intellectuals made research about the case, but they were over helmed by the secret services and they have been silenced forever, or put to house arrest. Relatives of the victims searched for their sons originally, in Siberia.

In Prerov - Czech territory - a train was transferring Hungarian and German refugees, who headed back to their village of Dobsina, Slovakia. This was a case of civil population that was originally removed from the frontline into safe housing in war time. The war party, communist guerrillas removed the civilians, almost exclusively women and their children from the railroad cars and shot them. When the commando used up their ammunition, they have silenced the still living children by suffocating them or beating them by shovels to death. The names of victims is known as well as the name of the commander's, who was Karel Pazur.

The editor of the newspaper KAPU (The Gate), Mr. Zoltán Brády, told us, that they have investigated the specific data of the mass murder cases sometimes under dangerous conditions, for some 6 years. They have completed a one hour long picture, a documentary with the title: "Not One is Responsible for You". Editor Brády was recognized for his work by the WFH and he was awarded the "Kővári László Silver Pen".

Aliz Bődök, who is a professional, lawyer, gave her expert's opinion to the international press conference and told the guests, who came from Brussels, about how the never eliminated Beneš Decrees are affecting life discriminating the Hungarians with their undemocratic patterns in Slovakia today and in a country that is seeking accession to the European Union. The Slovak authorities declared the finest arable land confiscated from Hungarian owners based on the Beneš Decrees - 55 years ago - to be "lands bearing no name", since - we are being told - those lands do not fall under the restitution laws brought in the early 1990-s. And so, today, at the beginning of the third millennium, the authorities are making out "possession documents" with "eternity features" regarding those arable lands confiscated from the original Hungarian owners to the name of Slovaks, who are now living in the northern counties of Slovakia, but who have been given 55 years ago confiscated land. They couldn't make their living on those lands and from agricultural activity, so they have moved back into their original dwellings in the northern parts of the country decades ago. In conclusion: The Beneš Decrees do not represent the past, but rather the bloody factual presence of confiscation and have a never dying message related to the crimes against humanity.

Mr. Imre Borbély, who is the president of Carpathian Region of the WFH in his German and Hungarian contribution has informed the press conference with the content of the correspondence from the presidium of the WFH to the High Commissioner for the EU Accession process, Günter Verheugen. The president of the WFH declared the position of the High Commissioner regarding the investigation of the Beneš Decrees - who stated that they were initiated before the establishment of the EU - as unacceptable. The president of WFH reminded the High Commissioner that mass murders and crimes against humanity never become obsolete. Consequently, the president of the WFH asked the High Commissioner to call on Bohemia and Slovakia to declare the Beneš Decrees obsolete and invalid.

Mr. Zoltán Király, who is the vice president of the WFH discussed the never ending responsibility of the Hungarian Governments for the elimination process of the Beneš Decrees. Mr. Király reminded the press conference that one year earlier, when the leaders of the WFH have informed the

audience in Strasbourg and the European Parliament in framework of hearings about how the Hungarian community in Slovakia was discriminated, Mr. Jan Marius Wiersma, MP - who is assigned by the EP to report about Slovakia - defended himself by saying that he had a daily working relationship with deputy prime minister Mr. Pál Csáky and who was delegated to the Slovak government by the Hungarian Coalition Party that Mr. Csáky never in one word has ever mentioned that the Hungarians in Slovakia had any grievances at all. And the MEP added: The people from the Hungarian government are around us for years, they made many comments, but never, ever mentioned that the Hungarians in Slovakia had been discriminated at all. Mr. Király hailed the fact that Mr. Orbán, Viktor, prime minister of Hungary some three months earlier did not avoid questions of MP-s in Brussels - who have been already informed about the Beneš Decrees by the leadership of the WFH - that the Decrees affected the Hungarians, too. On every European forum it is normally accepted that the government of the motherland country should aid the minority communities facing discrimination.

Mr. Gyula Geönczeöl, president elect of the National Council of the WFH in Slovakia, gave a complex overview about the Beneš Decrees and came to the conclusion that the Beneš Decrees caused to the Hungarian community an enormous degree of loss in her economical life and existential, self-supporting base which is very hard to replace. Based on the decrees, banks and businesses, cultural and educational facilities have been confiscated, too. The Hungarians could never replace the losses and if this problem remains unresolved, her entire existence and future will remain questionable, complex and hopeless. Mr. Geönczeöl was exiled in the United States for some twenty years and he was responsible at the press conference for the English interpretation.

The Honorary guest of the press conference was Mr. Miquel Mayol i Raynal, MEP from France and who belongs to the Catalanian community. He accepted the invitation of the president of the WFH to Slovakia. The Gentleman was introduced by Mrs. Mária Tajnay, member of the Central European Human Rights Committee. Mr. Mayol spoke in French and his contribution was interpreted to the press conference by Mr. Patrubby,

president of the WFH. The Hon. Mr. Raynal handed over his comments in written form. The Congressman called the Hungarians of this formerly Northern Hungarian province - now Slovakia - to be his friends and considered them to be the citizens of Europe. However, he warned - they should not believe that the minority rights in Europe could be achieved automatically. He added, that Europe in many aspects is a Europe of slogans, a Europe of nation states, a Europe of commercial interests and that the announced equality in opportunities in many cases don't get materialized. As an example he mentioned that in the European Parliament he himself cannot use his mother's tongue the Catalanian in spite of the fact this is the language of ten million European citizens, that in Spain it is the language of a significant province and it is the language of the autonomy of that province. He was encouraging the Hungarians in Slovakia to live with the Copenhagen Criteria established by the European Council based on which the countries seeking accession into the European Union are required to observe the rights of minorities. This is the time, the right moment, when it is possible to force the nation states - by the fulfilment of the accession requirements - that they would finally, observe the rights of minorities in real life.

Mr. Miquel Mayol has told also, that he was aware with the existence of the open letter by the presidium of the WFH to Mr. Günter Verheugen, he was highly supporting the letter and he was fully supporting the content of that correspondence and the materialization of her demands. The Catalanian MEP explained that he was a member of a group at the European Parliament - the European Free Alliance - that is bringing together some 30 parties, national movements of European nations that have no state: the Scotch, Corsicans, Galicians, Occitanians, Basques, Flamands, Catalanians, Sardinians and others. He came to Kéménd to assure the Hungarians about their solidarity. He announced that their political group working in the European Parliament - the European Free Alliance - openly supports the immediate elimination of the Beneš Decrees. These decrees, - as Mr. Mayol earlier in Brussels at the EP announced in his comments - are the shame of Europe. Finally, he encouraged the Hungarians in Slovakia that in case that their existing political representatives do not represent

their vital interests, the elimination of the Beneš Decrees, an actual and factual drive to implement equal interests, they should form a new political force which will be fully supported by the European Free Alliance.

Following this Mr. Miklós Patrubby, awarded Mr. Miquel Mayol with the "Silver Medal for the Hungarian Nation", the highest award of the Hungarian World Federation. The deeply impressed MEP gave to the WFH a Catalanian flag and sang to the audience the Catalanian National Anthem.

Present was at the press conference Bishop Géza Erdélyi of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Slovakia, the President of the Consulting Synod of the Universal Hungarian Reformed Church and member of the Supporting Body of the WFH. Bishop Erdélyi extended his warmest words to the scope of the press conference and thanked for this action by the WFH.

Observing the hopes and expectations of our Hungarian brothers, we may say that we made the right decision when we choose to walk on this road - Miklós Patrubby.

Miquel Mayol i Raynal

Member of the European Parliament, EFA

Lés minorités nationales et l'UE

C'est un honneur pour moi et un grand plaisir d'être ici aujourd'hui, et dans ce pays pour la première fois. Je remercie la Fédération Mondiale des Hongrois et le Comité pour les droits de l'homme en Europe Centrale pour cette invitation.

Comme vous tous je suis un minoritaire. J'appartiens à la minorité catalane de l'Etat français. Et comme vous nous avons subi une oppression culturelle, linguistique, économique de cet Etat français, l'un des Etats les plus centralistes du monde. Avec mes collègues de l'Alliance Libre Européenne au Parlement Européen nous sommes disposés à aider les minorités nationales et les peuples opprimés en Europe. Mais cette aide n'est pas aussi désintéressée qu'il y paraît, parce que seule l'union de tous les minoritaires et les peuples opprimés en Europe nous permettra de faire respecter nos droits.

Surtout ne croyez pas ceux qui vous disent que l'Europe, demain, résoudra tous vos problèmes. Il y a l'Europe des paroles et l'Europe des faits. L'Europe des belles déclarations et l'Europe des réalités. L'Europe des peuples et l'Europe des Etats. Je vais prendre deux exemples. La Charte européenne des droits fondamentaux dit que l'Europe respecte la diversité linguistique. Ma langue, le Catalan, est parlée par dix millions de personnes et pourtant, au Parlement européen, je ne peux pas m'exprimer dans ma langue mais seulement dans l'une des onze langues officielles des Etats membres. Autre exemple: la Déclaration de Copenhague du Conseil européen a posé les conditions pour l'admission dans l'Union des Etats de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale. La première de ces conditions est l'existence d'une démocratie politique et le respect des minorités.

Quand je suis entré au Parlement européen la Présidente du Comité pour les Droits de l'Homme en Europe Centrale m'a expliqué la situation de votre minorité et notamment les décrets Beneš. Je lui ai dit qu'il était

impossible que l'Etat slovaque puisse adhérer à l'Union européenne si ces Décrets n'étaient pas abrogés et tant qu'une juste réparation n'était pas accordée aux victimes. Je pense que j'étais naïf. Au Parlement européen je suis membre de la Commission des Affaires Etrangères. Nous avons reçu, il y a quelques jours, le Premier Ministre slovaque, M. Mikulas Dzurinda. Il nous a expliqué que la Slovaquie avait adopté des lois garantissant les droits de toutes les minorités. Je lui ai posé la question des Décrets Beneš et il a tenté de m'expliquer que ces décrets étaient quelque chose du passé et sur lesquels il n'était pas possible de revenir. Dans une deuxième intervention je lui ai dit que je n'étais pas d'accord. Que je ne comprenais pas pourquoi il était possible de réparer les injustices sociales du communisme et pourquoi il n'était pas possible de réparer les injustices nationales commises par un régime nationaliste quelques mois plus tôt. Les injustices commises avant celles-ci, qui ont frappé les juifs, ont été réparées par les Allemands, par les banques helvétiques. Demain les personnes contraintes au travail forcé par le régime nazi vont recevoir des indemnités de réparation par les entreprises qui ont bénéficié de leur travail. La position du gouvernement slovaque sur cette question a malheureusement le soutien du Commissaire Günter Verheugen qui considère, lui aussi, que les Décrets Beneš appartiennent au passé. Votre Fédération Mondiale des Hongrois, par une lettre ouverte du 23 février 2002 lui a justement répliqué que sa position consiste à soutenir un authentique crime contre l'humanité et que ces crimes-là sont imprescriptibles. Il faut donner à cette réponse toute la publicité qu'elle mérite.

Malgré cette injustice criante je pense qu'avant 2004 l'Etat slovaque risque d'être admis dans l'Union européenne. Il nous appartient de tout faire pour saisir l'opinion publique de cette question. Si les Etats européens ne vous font pas justice, il faut que les citoyens européens les obligent à reconsidérer leur position. C'est cette solidarité-là que la Confédération européenne des partis et mouvements à laquelle j'appartiens, le Parti démocratique des Peuples d'Europe (Alliance libre européenne) peut vous proposer. Nous rassemblons aujourd'hui près de trente organisations politiques de toute l'Europe, de la Corse à l'Ecosse, de la Bretagne au Sud-Tyrol. Si les partis hongrois aujourd'hui existants refusent de se

lancer dans la bataille contre l'injustice dont vous êtes victimes je vous invite à créer votre propre mouvement. Ce mouvement pourra rejoindre notre confédération. Ensemble, avec notre Présidente, la flamande Nelly MAES, je vous propose de travailler à la construction d'une Europe plus authentique, une Europe qui respectera les droits de tous les peuples et de toutes les minorités. C'est pour cela que je vous disais en commençant que ma solidarité n'était pas totalement désintéressée: l'Europe a besoin de vous.

Kémend, Slowakei, 4 avril 2002

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
2002.04.18.

Dekrete Slowakei

von Karl-Peter Schwarz

PRESSBURG, im April. Ladislav Rosinger, geboren in Preßburg, lebt heute in Haifa. Er war aus der Slowakei des Monsignore Tiso, die mit Deutschland verbündet war und Juden den Nazis auslieferte, nach England geflüchtet und hatte sich dort der tschechoslowakischen Exilarmee angeschlossen. Nach Kriegsende kehrte er in seine Heimat zurück. 1949, nach der Machtübernahme der Kommunisten in der Tschechoslowakei, emigrierte er nach Israel. 1950 wurde das Eigentum der Familie Rosinger, zwei Häuser und ein Geschäft in Preßburg, auf der Grundlage des Dekretes Nr. 108/1945 des tschechoslowakischen Präsidenten Edvard Beneš (HATSCHEK AUF S) konfisziert. Der Grund: Die Geschäftskorrespondenz des Familienbetriebs war in der Zwischenkriegszeit in deutscher Sprache geführt worden; auf dem Briefkopf stand: „Emrich Rosinger. Bau- und Möbelbeschläge – Metallwaren – Werkzeuge. Bratislava“. Nach Absatz 3 des Dekretes Nr. 108 erfaßte die „Konfiskation des feindlichen Vermögens“ auch jenes von Personen, die „der Germanisierung oder Magyarisierung auf dem Gebiet der Tschechoslowakei Vorschub geleistet“ hatten – zum Beispiel durch die Verwendung eines deutschen Briefkopfs in der Firmenkorrespondenz. Seit 1996 bemüht sich Ladislav Rosinger, Veteran

der tschechoslowakischen Armee, um die Rückgabe des Eigentums. Erfolglos, denn die Beneš-Dekrete sind in der Slowakei wie in der Tschechischen Republik weiterhin „fester Bestandteil der Rechtsordnung“.

Die Familie Schramm betrieb in der ersten tschechoslowakischen Republik ein florierendes Steinmetzunternehmen. Jeder zweite Grabstein auf dem Preßburger Andreasfriedhof stammt aus ihrer Produktion. An den Sohn der Katharina Schramm, Robert Stirba (HATSCHEK AUF S), erinnert eine Gedenktafel in Lubietova (Libethen), einer Ortschaft nahe Banska Bystrica (Neusohl). Stirba war dort am 8. Januar 1945 als „Angehöriger der tschechoslowakischen Auslandsarmee in der Sowjetunion“ (Partisan) bei einem Feuergefecht mit deutschen Soldaten gefallen. Katharina Schramm als nächste Verwandte wurde daher anerkannt nach den Bestimmungen des Gesetzes Nr. 255/1946, das „Angehörige der tschechoslowakischen Armee und andere Teilnehmer des nationalen Befreiungskampfes“ zu bevorzugter Behandlung berechnete. Dennoch wurde der Familie auf der Grundlage der Beneš-Dekrete das Eigentum entzogen, wogegen 1964 (!) sogar die „Vereinigung der antifaschistischen Kämpfer“ (SPB) protestierte. Theresia Schramm, die Schwester des gefallenen Partisanen, hat das Familieneigentum bis heute nicht zurückerhalten.

Den Namen der Familie Werner verzeichnet die große Enzyklopädie „Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart“ (MGG) unter dem Stichwort „Preßburg“. 1840 hatte der Klavierbauer Peter Werner seine eigene Fabrik gegründet, die zweite ihrer Art in dieser damals blühenden Stadt. In den Jahrzehnten bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg brachte es die Firma Werner zur Marktführerschaft in Ungarn (die Slowakei gehörte bis 1918 zum transleithanischen Teil der Doppelmonarchie). Am Preßburger Fischmarkt, Ecke Lange Gasse, ließ die Familie ein prächtiges Gebäude im Wiener Ringstraßenstil errichten, in dem die schönsten Musikinstrumente aus ihrer Produktion ausgestellt wurden. Das Haus steht immer noch, spätere Eingriffe in die Bausubstanz haben es leider häßlich entstellt (Hviezdoslav-Platz Nr. 12). Auch die Familie Werner lebt nach wie vor in Preßburg, sie wurde nicht vertrieben, „nur“ enteignet – und sie hat ihr Eigentum bis heute nicht zurückerhalten. Seit zehn Jahren wird die Restitution auf die lange Bank geschoben. Im Zuge des Verfahrens hat der Preßburger Magistrat, Abteilung Altstadt, dem Kläger am 9.6. 1998 einen Brief zugestellt, in dem mit erfrischender Klarheit und völlig korrekt festgestellt wird, was die tschechische Regierung, die slowakische Regierung und EU-Kommissar

Verheugen mit großem Aufwand zu verdunkeln versuchen: „Die Beneš-Dekrete wurden bis heute nicht aufgehoben, also sind sie gültig“.

Nach dem Krieg wurden 32.000 Karpatendeutsche aus der Slowakei vertrieben. Die wenigen Verbliebenen und ihre Nachkommen (nach der Volkszählung 2001 offiziell nur noch rund 5400, in Wirklichkeit etwa 15.000) werden von der slowakischen Restitutionsgesetzgebung genauso diskriminiert wie die deutsche Minderheit in Böhmen und Mähren von der tschechischen, denn in der Frage der „Unantastbarkeit der Nachkriegsordnung“ sind sich die Nachfolgestaaten der tschechoslowakischen Föderation völlig einig. Zwar hat sich der slowakische Nationalrat (Parlament) im Gegensatz zum tschechischen schon vor zehn Jahren für die Vertreibung der Deutschen explizit entschuldigt und das ihr zugrundeliegende Prinzip der Kollektivschuld verurteilt, zu den Beneš-Dekreten aber vertritt die Slowakei den Standpunkt der Tschechischen Republik. Dem außenpolitischen Ausschuß des Europäischen Parlaments, der Prag kritisiert, aber Preßburg nicht erwähnt, ist der Vorwurf nicht zu ersparen, damit selbst gegen den Gleichheitsgrundsatz zu verstossen.

Die gemeinsame Haltung zu den Dekreten hatten die Tschechische und die Slowakische Republik 1992 im Zuge der Auflösung der Föderation vereinbart. Für die Slowakei kommt ein Alleingang heute auch deshalb nicht in Frage, weil sie zu den chronisch fußkranken Beitrittskandidaten der Nato und der EU zählt und auf tschechische Fürsprache bitter angewiesen ist. Der Sache nach geht es ihr dabei nicht so sehr um die kleine deutsche Minderheit, sondern um jene der rund fünfhunderttausend Ungarn, bei der sie sich bis heute nicht entschuldigt hat. Ein unlängst im „Slovak Spectator“ erschienener Leserbrief schilderte die slowakische Restitutionspraxis so: „Janos lebt und arbeitet auf dem Hof, der seiner Familie seit Generationen gehört. (Nach dem Krieg) gibt es ein neues Gesetz, das alle Ungarn für kollektiv schuldig erklärt, ihr Eigentum konfisziert und den meisten auch noch die Staatsbürgerschaft aberkennt. Den Hof bekommt ein Slowake, Pavol, der nie dafür bezahlen mußte. Dann kommen die Kommunisten und kollektivieren alles, auch den Hof von Janos. (In den neunziger Jahren) wird die Kollektivierung rückgängig gemacht, und wer bekommt den Bauernhof? Nicht Janos, dessen Vorfahren das Land jahrhundertlang beackerten, sondern Pavol. Nennen Sie das Gerechtigkeit? Ich nenne das rassistische Diskriminierung“.

Die Problematik der Beneš-Dekrete wird zumeist im Zusammenhang mit den Deutschen in Böhmen und Mähren gesehen. In Wirklichkeit wirken sich ihre diskriminierenden Bestimmungen heute weit mehr noch gegen die

slowakischen Ungarn aus. Die Kollektivschuldthese des Präsidenten Beneš ist in ihrem Falle erst recht absurd, denn es kann kein vernünftiger Grund dafür angeführt werden, daß zwar die slowakischen Ungarn nach dem Krieg kollektiv dafür bestraft wurden, daß ihr Siedlungsgebiet 1939 Ungarn angeschlossen wurde, aber nicht die Slowaken, deren separatistische Führung sich aktiv an der Zerschlagung der Tschechoslowakei beteiligte und deren Staat sich dann mit Hitlerdeutschland verbündete.

Mit Rücksicht auf den Zusammenhalt der Koalition in Preßburg, die eine Rückkehr der nationalpopulistischen „Bewegung für eine demokratische Slowakei“ (HZDS) Vladimir Meciar (HATSCHEK AUF C) verhindern will, hat sich die „Partei der Ungarischen Koalition“ (SMK) gegenüber ihren Partnern in der Regierung verpflichtet, die Frage der Beneš-Dekrete bis zu den Wahlen im September ruhen zu lassen. Angesichts der laufenden Diskussion auf europäischer Ebene muß sie sich nun allerdings mit Kritik aus den eigenen Reihen auseinandersetzen, sie „verrate“ die ungarische Minderheit, weil sie einen günstigen Zeitpunkt zur Vertretung ihrer Anliegen verpasse.

Im ungarischen Dorf Kemend (slowakisch: Kamendin) fand vor wenigen Tagen eine Kundgebung von Opfern der Beneš-Dekrete statt, die vom Weltbund der Ungarn veranstaltet wurde. Mehrere Frauen berichteten dort, wie sie mit ihren Kindern von Soldaten in Viehwaggons getrieben und nach Böhmen verbracht wurden, wo sie als Zwangsarbeiterinnen in der nach der Vertreibung der Deutschen verödeten Landwirtschaft eingesetzt wurden. Ein Mann erzählte unter Tränen, wie er im Alter von vierzehn Jahren als „Kriegsverbrecher“ verurteilt und deportiert wurde. Keiner von ihnen ist je entschädigt worden, im Gegensatz zu den Sudetendeutschen gab es für die Ungarn auch keine Unterstützung aus einem Lastenausgleichfonds. Aliz Bödök, eine Rechtsanwältin aus Komorn (Komarno, Komarom), sprach in Kemend von einer methodischen staatlichen Diskriminierung der Ungarn durch die slowakische Restitutionspraxis.

An Erweiterungskommissar Verheugen richtete der Weltbund schon vor Monaten einen Brief, in dem es unter anderem heißt: „Wie können Unrecht und Diskriminierung beendet werden, wenn

diese Gesetze und Dekrete weiter existieren und immer wieder bekräftigt werden? Hitlers Befehle zur Ausrottung ganzer Bevölkerungsgruppen erfolgten ebenfalls vor der Bildung des heutigen vereinten Deutschlands, und wir können uns nicht vorstellen, daß sie heute Teil der deutschen Rechtsordnung sein könnten. Wie können Sie die Hinnahme der Beneš-Dekrete rechtfertigen? Nach dieser Denkweise könnte Deutschland auch dann ein Mitglied der Europäischen Union sein, wenn es über Gesetze verfügte, die die Franzosen zu Feinden des deutschen Volkes erklären.“ Der Brief ist mit 23. Februar 2002 datiert. Am 11. April verkündete Verheugen in Prag zum wiederholten Male, die Beneš-Dekrete gehörten der Geschichte an und stellten daher kein Hindernis auf dem Weg in die EU dar.

Press Release and Invitation

The World Federation of Hungarians organizes a demonstration in Balassagyarmat on 4th of June. The meeting will be held near the Palóc Museum, at 16.30.

As it is well known, in the period 1945-48 President Eduard Beneš edicted more than eighty decrees, the so called Beneš Decrees, which declared German and Hungarian minorities living in Czechoslovakia enemies. By means of Beneš Decrees several millions of people belonging to the minorities mentioned above, have been deprived of their properties and forced to leave their homes. More than that, Beneš Decrees led directly to mass murders, some of them being well known – like Pozsony-Ligetfalu and Prerov – but still not officially recognized. Beneš Decrees get their actuality in the European integration process of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, because the decrees, which are still valid in these countries, discriminate minorities. Beneš Decrees state German and Hungarian minorities as second class citizens, who may be deprived of their properties and may be forced to leave their homes. Beneš Decrees violate almost every article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization.

It is not generally known, but Beneš Decree affected 200.000 Hungarians in Slovakia. Some 70.000 have been forced to leave their homes, and have been deported to Czech territory, in the place of Sudeten-Germans. Here they have been forced to work like slaves on the farms of Czech farmers. The majority never returned to their homes. Some 130.000 have been thrown over the border with Hungary.

In the last year, the World Federation of Hungarians has focused the attention of the European Parliament several times, on the issue of Beneš Decrees, highlighting the unacceptable fact that these decrees are still valid, and more than that, they are functioning and taking their victims in 2002, too. Therefore the World Federation of Hungarians demands the abolishment of Beneš Decrees, considering that a country which keeps in it's legal system such discriminatory laws, can not be member of the European Union, where discrimination of national and ethnic minorities is forbidden.

On the demonstration organized on Balassagyarmat, there will be present Countess Alice Esterházy, Honorary President of the WFH, daughter of the martyr politician János Esterházy, and Miklós Patrubby President of the WFH. At the end of the demonstration they are going to give a press conference.

Press Office of the WFH

Prof. Dr. Gyula Popély
Károli Gáspár Reformed University
Budapest

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST BENEŠ DECREES

Balassagyarmat, Square of the Palóc Museum

4TH OF JUNE, 2002, 16,30

On the anniversary of the Trianon Peace Treaty (dictate), the World Federation of Hungarians (WFH) organized a protest demonstration against the Beneš Dictates, in the city of Balassagyarmat. The location was picked because in 1919, the citizens of this city chased out the invading Czech armed forces. With this heroic deed, Balassagyarmat earned the title of „Heroic City” in the Hungarian History.

The demonstration was coordinated by the President of the WFH, sponsored by the Major of the City, Mr. Peter Juhász, the City Council, Mr. László Pulay and members of The Civitas Fortissima Circle. The Honorary President of the WFH and her husband were also present.

Also in attendance were: Mr. Gyula Popély, Mr. Gyula Geonczeol. and the President of the WFH, Mr. Miklós Patrubby. The demonstration was broadcast on the Internet Radio.

The demonstration was held in the garden of the Palóc Museum across the previously consecrated „Country Flag”.

The slogan of the occasion was: „Lépj te is” (You step forward too). The enthused demonstrators denounced the - still in force - Beneš Decrees. This demonstration wanted to signal to the Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin and to bring to the attention of the leading politicians of the World, that there are laws in force in the 21st Century which are based and the doctrine of „Collective Guilt”. On the bases of this illegal law, the Czechoslovakian government committed crimes against The Hungarians (and the Germans), that are viewed as one of the most grievous.

The aim of these Decrees was - and in some degrees are - genocidium. These illegal activities are still going on - in more subtle ways.

On the bases of these Beneš Decrees, the Czechoslovakian government deprived of citizenship, properties, insurances, and pensions app. 200,000 Hungarians and deported about 70,000 to the Sudeten Land. as virtual slaves. Their properties were occupied by Czech and Slovak settlers. About 130,000 Hungarians were deported to Hungary in a forced exchange program.

Some unknown number of Hungarians were killed by Czechoslovakian armed forces, or State Security officers. For instance . 90 young Székely (Sekler)-Hungarians from the county of Csík (now in Romania) were killed in Pozsony-Ligetfalu., after the war ended in 1945 (Documented). Mass-murders were also committed in Prerov, Nográd (Kassa-Kosice), Liptoszentmiklós.

This facts should be brought to the attention of the European Parliament. We also should demand that the sufferers of the „Hungarian Holocaust” be given the same just restitution and compensation as the victims of the Jewish Holocaust received.

It is also imperative, that a State should not be accepted to the EU, that still have a constitution that is built on laws and decrees which are not compatible with membership.

We believe, that those parliamentary representatives who are lenient toward the Czech and Slovak point of view, should reconsider their stand on the matter, on the bases of information provided. Ignoring this problem will only aggravate the present difficulties.

We appeal to the fairness of the leaders, to remedy the grave situation and force the Czech and Slovak governments to comply with the laws, expectations and recommendations of the European Union.

The Honorable Ms. Mary Robinson
High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHCHR-UNOG
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Dear Ms. Robinson,

I am turning to you in order to seek your support for the Hungarian and other ethnic groups in Slovakia, whose human rights are being seriously violated, as indicated in the attached Memorandum adopted by the World Federation of Hungarians' National Council of Slovakia (14 July 2001).

Most of the Presidential Decrees of Edward Beneš are, as unbelievable as it may sound, still in force. It was these 89 decrees, edicts, laws and statutes, which permitted expulsion, deportation, internment, peoples court procedures, citizenship revocations, property confiscation, condemnation to forced labour camps, forced changes of nationality and appointment of government managers to German and Hungarian owned businesses and farms after World War II, and which through the inclusion of the concept of "collective guilt" turned inhabitants belonging to the German or Hungarian ethnic groups into second class citizens. The fact that these Decrees are still in force both in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia prevent people belonging to the German and Hungarian ethnic groups from reclaiming their confiscated property or receiving compensation for it. Furthermore, these Decrees provide the legal basis for possible future atrocities, including genocide.

A few days prior to the adoption of the attached Memorandum, the Parliament of Slovakia decided to reorganize the country's administrative entities in a culturally and geographically totally illogical manner, the only goal of which is to ensure that the percentage of the ethnic Hungarians be reduced to below 20% in each one of them.

As the Memorandum indicates, Slovakia continues to refuse the establishment of a Hungarian-language university and does not grant this ethnic group the right to govern the organizational, personnel and professional aspects of Hungarian-language primary and secondary educational institutions. Moreover, in view of Slovakia's desire to join the European Union rapidly, political parties and non-governmental organizations within the country attempt to cover up these human rights violations.

Aware that democracy and stability can only be built on respect of human rights, and conscious of the dangers that the discrimination of ethnic minorities may entail, we kindly request you to

- include the question of the human rights violation of ethnic groups in Slovakia on the agenda of the next session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights; and
- appoint a special rapporteur with a view to preparing a report on the situation of the Hungarian and other ethnic groups in Slovakia to be submitted to ECOSOC and the General-Assembly of the United Nations through the regular channels.

Thank you in advance for ensuring that light is shed on the discrimination against ethnic groups in Slovakia and for taking all appropriate measures to promote respect for their human rights.

Sincerely yours,

*

A letter campaign, based on this prototype was started by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the World Federation of Hungarians in July 2001. We are informed that until March 2002, more than 10.000 letters arrived from different parts of the World, to the UNO headquarters in Geneva.

MEMORANDUM
of the Presidium of the National Council of the
World Federation of Hungarians in Slovakia,

The Presidium of the Council of the World Federation of Hungarians in Slovakia, realizing the sad fact that the National Council of the Slovak Republic, along with the government of the Slovak Republic uses the Hungarian community living in Slovakia, and its legitim representatives, to promote their own narrow and nationalistic aims, while both its inherited and newly created laws discriminate against the Hungarian community living in Slovakia, publishes the present

MEMORANDUM.

- a. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic is discriminative. The Preamble to the Constitution must be modified to include everybody who lives in the territory of Slovakia as constituent of the state, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or religious belonging.
- b. The Presidential Decrees of Edward Beneš are contrary to the internationally recognized basic principles of law and justice, because they recognize the principle of collective guilt and provide a legal framework even today for the destruction of the Hungarian community living in the Slovak Republic. We demand that the appropriate authorities withdraw and nullify the Presidential Decrees of Edward Beneš.
- c. After the withdrawal and nullification of the Beneš Decrees every legitim victim of these Decrees should be promptly and fully compensated.
- d. The National Council of the Slovak Republic should provide by law for the creation of an Autonomous Hungarian University, whose location shall be determined by the representatives of the Hungarian community.

- e. A proportionate percentage of the state budget for education, based on the proportion of the Hungarian population of Slovakia, should be handled by a Hungarian Education Institute. This Institute will be responsible for the organizational, personnel and professional direction of the Hungarian educational network.
- f. The National Council of the Slovak Republic should provide by law, based on the Hungarian population, proportionate financial support for the maintenance of Hungarian national culture.
- g. The National Council of the Slovak Republic should create by law an opportunity for the Hungarian community living in Slovakia to create territorial, cultural and personal autonomies. Otherwise we demand national self-determination.

Presidium,
Council of the World Federation of Hungarians in Slovakia
László Gál Soóky, President
Marcelháza, July 14, 2001.

Sir John Bowring

Philologist, XVIIIth Century

The Hungarian Language

The Hungarian language goes far back. It developed in a very peculiar manner, and its structure reaches back to times most of the spoken European languages did not even exist. It is a language in which there is a logic and mathematics with the adaptability and malleability of strenght and chords.

The Englishman should be proud that his language indicates an epic of human history. One can show forth his origin, and alien layers can be distinguished in it, which gathered together during the contacts with different nations. Whereas the Hungarian language is like a rubble stone, consisting of only one piece on which the storm of time left not scratch. It is not a calendar that adjusts to the changes of ages.

This language is the oldest and most glorious monument of national sovereignty and mental independence.

What scholars could not solve, they ignore. In philology it is the same as in archeology. The floors of the old Egyptian temples, which were made out of a single rock cannot be explained. No one knows where they came from, from which mountain the wondrous mass was taken, or how they were transported and lifted in place in the temples. The genuiness of the Hungarian language is much more wondrous than this. He who solves it shall be analyzing the divine secret: „*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*”

Kiadja:
A Magyarok Világszövetsége

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elnöke

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