

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2577/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Defence of minorities in the Carpathian basin

The accusation is justified that, while we mount the barricades for human rights and the rights of minorities all over the world, unresolved issues remain within the European Union's own territory.

A number of anti-Hungarian incidents have been reported from Cluj recently:

- on 15 March, a 17-year-old Hungarian boy who was intending to attend a commemoration of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution was beaten unconscious;
- on 26-27 March, threatening anti-Hungarian and anti-Jewish graffiti appeared on various buildings in the city centre;
- in the night of 18-19 April, unknown persons assaulted three young men. The perpetrators called their victims 'bozgors', i.e. exiles;
- in the night of 20 April a young man aged about 20 struck two girls - university students - who were speaking Hungarian.

In the Carpathian basin regions, civil war conditions could have arisen in a similar way to what happened in Yugoslavia. In Romania things took a positive turn: in order to overcome the ethnic tensions which were fomented in the bloody spring of 1990, Hungarians who came under attack on the street opted to use the instruments of parliamentary democracy. Instead of violence, they used legislative and local government tools to protect their rights.

There is a danger that ultranationalism may break out again in the Carpathian basin. The aggressive and abusive behaviour which we have seen constitutes a provocation to minorities and to all those who are interested in the continuation of peaceful coexistence.

We are concerned about the way in which expressions of anti-Hungarian sentiment are gaining ground again.

How will the Commission act to deal with the specific cases or to prevent similar occurrences?