

Catalonia's aspirations for independence have been in the public's mind for weeks. The response to the independence referendum was police brutality, the likes of which was rarely seen in 21st century Europe. The Szekler National Council, through the fate of the Szekler peoples, is well aware of the collective experience of oppressed communities, and expresses its deepest sympathy and solidarity with their Catalan friends.

The statement of the Szekler National Council from the 3rd of June 2011 and 30th of November 2012 ("The Peoples of Europe are Equal", and the "Declaration on the Internal Enlargement of the European Union") are clear, and are based on generally accepted norms of international law. Against this background, our solidarity expressed above is based on the fact that through the Statute of the United Nations the people of the world express their belief in the sovereignty of the peoples, and the equality of great and small peoples. Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union establishes that the Union shall contribute to ensuring that these principles are respected.

The statement of the Szekler National Council on Equality between the Peoples of Europe states that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe „*notes that a majority of Council of Europe member states include communities with a strong cultural, political and historical identity, which are not mere regions but peoples and societies with a marked collective personality (described as regions, nations, nationalities, countries, etc.) that did not establish their own state but retain visible differentiating features that inform a political will for self government*” . These communities were involved in the historical process through which all values of European culture and civilization were born, which today also serve as the basis for the existence and functioning of the European Union. Consequently, these communities are equal with all the peoples of Europe that make up the majority in their own states. The Szekler National Council's opinion, as contained in their resolution, is that the values of the European Union can only be respected, their cultural diversity protected and maintained in the long run, if universal recognition of the equality of Europe's peoples is achieved regardless of whether these peoples, or nations have established their own state, or if it's an autochthonous community living in another country.

The Szekler National Council's statement on the internal enlargement of the European Union states: the organization accepts and supports the idea of internal enlargement and democratic changes within the European Union, which allow increased realization of the principle subsidiarity and allows for fulfillment of peoples right to self-determination, including the creation of new independent states.

The Catalans are right to call their freedom a European issue, a matter of European democracy. Be this about the freedom of expression, or about people's right to self determination, if the freedom of the Catalan people falls today, tomorrow all of Europe will become the continent of censorship, fear and the suppression of freedom of thought.

As an expression of solidarity, let the Catalan flag, the "*estelada*", be hoisted in as many locations as possible throughout the Day of Szekler Autonomy, as a symbol of human freedom in Europe today.

Izsák Balázs

President of the Szekler National Council

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