



Memorandum

on the 100th Anniversary of the Paris Peace Treaties

and the 75th Anniversary of the End of WWII

The Paris Peace Treaties at the end of WWI resulted in the re-drawing of the map of Europe for the creation of new nation states in Central and Eastern Europe. The boundaries of these successor states disregarded existing national and ethnic lines and historical development. The Allied Powers focussed only on the economic and strategic viability of the newly created states, which was inevitably done at the cost of the defeated nations, thus sowing the seeds of future ethnic unrest. It is a widely held view that the unfair nature of the Paris Peace Treaties was a contributing factor to WWII. The damage caused by both world wars is best characterised by the number of dead: at least 11 million people died in the First World War and more than 55 million perished in the Second World War.

On the ruins of this full-scale disaster the adage was born: No more wars! Following the armistice, people concentrated on clearing of the rubble and rebuilding. However, this process of cleansing and soul purification did not really materialise in people's head. The two opposing sides played out their ideological differences in the Cold War whose fault line sliced Europe into two.

On one side deep-running changes occurred. The centuries-old French-German rivalry underwent a profound transformation. By formulating common goals, a peace plan based on mutual interests came into existence. This became the cradle of European integration and of 'economic miracle' that created welfare societies in Western Europe.

As a result of the collapse of Communism, countries in Eastern Europe could be integrated in the politico-economic structure of the West. In these new circumstances the hitherto unresolved issues between Hungary and its neighbours had to be dealt with in a legal framework. One such issue remains that of the 2.2 million strong indigenous Hungarian minority living in neighbouring countries.

Today, when new worldwide crises paralyze our societies, on this prominent anniversary, we must re-evaluate the terms of human development, to put it on a new footing based on real equality among all people.

The Western European Association of Hungarian Country Organizations (NYEOMSZSZ) regards it as its duty to take a stance in the issues affecting these boundaries. We firmly believe that indigenous minorities should enjoy their rights to their language, cultural identity and traditional independent way of life that have developed over the centuries, in the same way as the main ethnic group of that country. Just as with the majority, minorities are entitled to these same rights, which in turn is the key to a balanced and conflict-free life in that country. Selfishness and a myopic attitude on the part of a nation state goes against the ethnic minorities in that country. In the spirit of our Greco-Roman heritage and Christian altruism, the inviolability of human rights and dignity should be part of the ethos of European integration and should have universal application for all countries concerned.

It is the EU's imminent obligation to work out the legal and constitutional parameters of such basic principles and then put into practice.

NYEOMSZSZ stands up for the fundamental linguistic, cultural and community rights of indigenous ethnic minorities, for their equal rights with the rest of the population in the countries they reside. We call on the various EU institutions, and national parliaments and governments to resolve the outstanding issues affecting the lives of indigenous ethnic minorities. Peaceful development in all areas of life based on a coordinated and balanced reconciliation of interests. In the spirit of democratic pluralism, let us retain the intellectual, linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe, and thus preserve her viability too.

Stockholm – Vienna – Frankfurt, May 2020

Szabolcs Bihari
vice chairman

dr. Ernő Deák
chairman

dr. Kornél Klement
vice chairman