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On October 19th, 2012, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights ruled on the cases of Catan and v 27 Others v. Moldova and Russia (no. 43370/04), Elena Căldare and 42 Others v. Moldova and Russia (no. 8252/05), Eleonora Cercavschi and 98 Others v. Moldova and Russia (no. 18454/06).

The European Court of Human Rights held, unanimously, that there had been a violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (right to education) in respect of the Russian Federation and, that there had been no violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights in respect of the Republic of Moldova. Additionally, the Court held that it was not necessary to examine separately the applicants' complaints under Article 8 or under Article 14 in conjunction with either Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 or Article 8. The Court held that Russia is to pay one million and twenty thousand EUR in respect of non-pecuniary damage and fifty thousand EUR for costs and expenses.

The applicants are citizens of the Republic of Moldova and inhabitants of the Transnistrian region, part of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Moldova but currently under the

de facto control of Russian Federation-backed separatists. The cases were logged before Court in 2004 and 2006 by parents, teachers and pupils from Ribnita, Tighina (Bender) and Grigoriopol from Transnistrian region of Republic of Moldova and concerns violations of the rights to education, private life and freedom from discrimination.

In 1992 control of the eastern part of Moldova was taken by violence and military support from outside. The self-proclaimed administration initiated the adoption of a "law" which sought to prohibit the use of Latin alphabet for Romanian language (defined as Moldovan) from all public fields of life in the region. Thus, the Cyrillic alphabet was imposed on the region's educational institutions, pupils and parents were forced to accept this linguistic anomaly, a combination of spoken and written language, which is not widely used even in the region.

The applicants in this case, were forced to accept the education of their children against their own beliefs or to resist to many and various pressures from illegal administration in the region.

They have insisted that their institutions remain under the jurisdiction and educational programs of constitutional authorities, the teaching being conducted in Romanian language in its natural form, with Latin script. As a result they were subject to an orchestrated liquidation policy through the siege and blockade of Latin-script schools, intimidation and prosecution, detention and „criminal investigation” of teachers, and threats and harassment of pupils and parents.

Two cases were lodged in the fall of 2004 and the third one was lodged in the spring of 2006. First public hearing was held on 9 June 2009, the case was declared partly admissible 15 June 2010. On 14 December 2010 the Chamber to which the case had been allocated relinquished jurisdiction in favour of the Grand Chamber which held the hearing of 25 of January 2012.

Ion Manole and Alexandru Postica from Promo-LEX Association, representatives of the victims in these cases stated that: "Today's decision is an historic one given the findings that were made and its consequences on the human rights situation in the region". We hope that after this decision, the situation of these schools will improve. We will continue our efforts in promoting and defending human rights and democratic values in this region that is dominated by impunity. Human rights are supreme values recognized by the international community and they must triumph in enclosed spaces where grave human rights abuses occur. Thus, we welcome this historic decision long awaited by people from the Transnistrian region of Moldova".

On behalf of Promo-LEX Association and 170 applicants, Ion Manole and Alexandru Postica express sincere thanks to our litigation partners [INTERIGHTS](#); [Open Society Institute](#), [National Endowment for Democracy](#) and [Civil Rights Defenders](#) for support; Promo-LEX team involved in litigation process; Rehabilitation Centre for Torture victims "[Memoria](#)", Independent Analytical Centre "[Expert Grup](#)", Educational [Centre PRO DIDACTICA](#), as well as to all those who, during eight years, were involved in preparations, analysis, documentation, expertise, litigation, translation, etc.

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