

**Ion Manole: “Unfortunately for politicians, the lawyers have a different perspective on the issues in the Transnistrian region.”**

On January 25, in the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) hearings took place on the case of the students from the Transnistrian high schools whose courses are taught in Romanian. The clauses had been sent in 2004 and 2006 by the parents, teachers and students from Ribnita, Tighina and Grigoriopol towns. The document concerns the violation of the educational right, private life and the right of not being discriminated against.

Ion Manole, the head of “Promo-LEX” Association, was present at the hearings from ECHR, being one of Promo-LEX lawyers who represented the prosecutors. He told in an interview for Moldova.ORG about the way the procedures have passed, and also about the current situation of the schools with Romanian language teachings from the Transnistrian region.

Moldova.ORG: Why was the case of the students from Transnistria brought so late in front of ECHR?

Ion Manole: It’s true; the time seems to be quite long. But I think that we should also take into account the complexity of this case. My colleagues have had to go through a large amount of work. On this track I would like to ask for permission to congratulate all the students, parents and teachers from the Transnistrian region which have urged to and have had the courage to send complains to ECHR.

Furthermore, I would like to thank to my colleagues from

Promo-LEX, to our inner partners (Memoria Center, Expert-Group and others), as well as to those from outside, especially to those from Interrights from London.

Wasn't it possible to solve the issue in the schools with Romanian language teaching system directly by Moldova and Russia without the international organizations' involvement?

Firstly, I believe that we should clarify two things: if the culprit states want these things and what have the authorities done, separately or jointly, to solve the problems (I hereby underline that we cannot talk only about one issue) of the students, parents and teachers.

1. In my opinion, Moldova has and has always had an endless will to solve the problem about the protection of the right to education for the students of eight schools in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. Another issue is the fact that they did not succeed to provide a credible strategy to defend the persons whose rights have been violated and protect their fundamental freedoms. Russia doesn't want to get involved in the management of the problems the people from the region deal with, regardless of their ethnicity or citizenship. So far, Russia avoided taking any responsibility for the current human rights violations. Moreover, Russia succeeded to misinform the national and international public opinion. Today, most of the foreign politicians comprehend a wrong perspective on the conflict in Transnistria. Because of this wrong comprehension of the problem, most of the issues in the region pop up, affecting students, parents, teachers who meet in a legal and constitutional educational system.

2. The Constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova have mainly financially supported the eight schools in the region, but, unfortunately they have not been used to protect those who have suffered as a result of pressure, oppression and determent. For example, no one of those who vandalized buildings, abused and took hostage parents and teachers, or

prohibited to provide clean water to the children, have been sanctioned. Contrarily, Russia continued to financially support and help the regional political administration, despite of giving support to the regime which has brutally and obviously violated the rights of these people.

What was Russia's attitude during the hearings?

It was the same as the previous one (of June 2009). Nothing changed. Russia continues to plead that they aren't responsible for Tiraspol administration's actions and the whole responsibility should be taken by Chisinau and Tiraspol. Unfortunately for politicians, the lawyers have a different perspective on the issues in the Transnistrian region.

What should the authorities from Chisinau do in order to avert future joyless experiences such as those happened in the schools from the Transnistrian region?

I would prefer to stop not only at the students', professors' and teachers' situation from those eight high schools. We will continue to believe and to plead on the fact that the key to solve the conflict in Transnistria is in the hands of the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova. This key is called fundamental freedoms and human rights.

We will have a different situation only when Chisinau will keep its positive promises toward its citizens on both banks of Nistru River and only when the law institutions will correctly apply the national legislation and use all the instruments provided in the framework of international law. We are looking for an environment when the population in the region will have certain guarantees for their life and security, as well as respect and trust in the State of Republic of Moldova, in democratic values and of international law. If an attitude change won't be registered, not necessarily significant, the people from Transnistria will continue to be discriminated comparing to the rest of the

population of Moldova, having no equal access to a fair justice and other services provided by the state of whose citizens are.

You are in a permanent contact with the teachers and students of the high schools with a teaching system in Romanian from Transnistria. What expectations do they have from the authorities from Chisinau?

Their expectations are neither absurd nor fantastic. Their expectations are innate, human and natural. They don't live in the soviet occupation era, time period when human rights were unknown and violated. They are conscious of the occurrence created and have waited for two decades in order their problems to be fairly solved. Unfortunately the things turned the other way. Many have left. Those who chose to stay don't lose their hope. They hope for a normal life at home, where to be able to study, work and live according to their own beliefs, and their children to return after graduation from colleges from other parts of the country or from outside.

Source: Moldova.org