

Regional flags in Romania: double standards against minority symbols



Banning the Szekler flag

In 2014, the situation of the Szekler flag worsened considerably. While in the previous year the Prefect of Covasna county demanded the Szekler flag to be taken down from local institutions, in 2014 court decisions rendered the Szekler flag illegal and ordered the mayors and the president of Covasna County Council to take them down. This in spite of the fact that in 2013, even the Human Rights Report of Romania, made by the Embassy of The United States in Romania mentioned the problematics of the Szekler flag in the section destined to the breach of minority rights.

The courts justified the decisions saying that the flag is illegal, because Szeklerland is not a territorial administrative unit, and the Constitution of Romania does not recognize regions. However, in other regions, for example in Moldova, the regional flag of Moldova can be displayed without any problem, what is more, the Prime Minister of Romania, Victor Ponta was photographed at a public event holding the regional flag of Moldova.



Prime Minister Victor Ponta proudly holds the regional flag of Moldova, after court decisions pronounced regional flags illegal

These circumstances suggest that the Romanian state has a double standard regarding regional symbols, while the Moldovan flag can be displayed without being ordered to be taken down, the same principle does not apply to the Szekler flag that has to be taken down.

Banned: The flag of Covasna County and the flag of Sfantu-Gheorghe



President of Covasna County Sándor Tamás and mayor of Sfantu Gheorghe Árpád Antal holding the banned flag of Covasna County

In Covasna county more than 40 lawsuits were initiated against Hungarian inscriptions and Szekler symbols, among them the flags of Covasna County and the municipality of Sfantu Gheorghe. The Brasov Court annulled both the flags of Covasna County and the municipality of Sfantu Gheorghe. According to the President of Covasna County Council, these decisions divide the counties of Romania into two sections: two counties that cannot have a flag of their own, namely Covasna and Harghita counties, and the rest of the country's counties, that can have their own flag. The president of Covasna county called this court decision a blatant double standard showing that the very same court that made the decision is situated in a building in front of which a county flag, the flag of Brasov county is displayed.

The Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance was founded by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania with the purpose of monitoring, signaling and thus preventing discrimination of all sorts against the Hungarian community in Romania. In order to signal the problems that our community is facing, we would like to start a newsletter campaign with the goal of informing the international community about the abuse that our community is confronted with. We would kindly like to ask you to take a few minutes and read about the discrimination and violation of rights that take place in the Hungarian inhabited Covasna County in Szeklerland, Romania.

For further information, please contact us at office@mikoimre3szek.ro / mikoimre.haromszek@rmdsz.ro or at our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/mikoimre3szek