**10th Forum on Minority Issues**

**Pro Regio Siculorum Association – Romania**

*Oral statement*

Good morning!

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Pro Regio Siculorum Association was founded with the purpose of addressing the problems faced by the Hungarian community in Romania, to draw attention to the violation of their linguistic and cultural rights, and the various forms of ethnic discrimination that they face. We believe that it is important to bring these issues to the attention of the international community.

Although Romania has ratified numerous human rights declarations, even ones specifically concerning the rights of minorities, and stipulated these rights in its national legislation, in practice, not all of these commitments have been met. There is often a discrepancy between the normative, legislative framework and the implementation of these laws. Minority education is no exception.

As stipulated in the recommendations prepared at the very first session of the UN Minority Forum in 2008, *“education is an inalienable human right”*, and *“represents an essential support for community identity”*. This is especially relevant in the case of minority communities.

Minority education in Romania faces a number of challenges at the moment.

First of all, in secondary and high school education Hungarian pupils are still faced with the challenge of having to study Romanian on the same level as children whose mother tongue is Romanian. New textbooks for teaching Romanian to minorities are progressively being implemented, however, we believe that a more comprehensive approach is needed, an entirely revised methodology, in order to ensure that Hungarian children acquire proper language skills in Romanian, which focus primarily on communication competences, thus preventing later disadvantages for Hungarian youth in higher education and on the labour market.

Regarding access to quality education in the mother tongue, another increasingly concerning matter has to do with the lack of textbooks in Hungarian in primary and secondary education.

Finally, one of the most pressing issues affecting Hungarian youth in Romania is the fact that higher education in the mother tongue is not provided in all fields, most notably in engineering and medical training. The latter has been a widely disputed issue, since the founding of a Hungarian department at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Tîrgu Mureș has been repeatedly denied by Romanian authorities, despite a 2011 law on education, which stipulates that universities must establish separate and independent faculties or departments for minority students.

Therefore, we believe that it is of crucial importance to re-iterate the right of minorities to quality education in their mother tongue, while also enforcing their right to have a say in developing and monitoring the content, the instruments, the methods, as well as the planning and the application of these when it comes to the education of their children. Without quality education in the mother tongue the preservation and the prospering of a community identity cannot be ensured.