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... One of Moldova's characteristic traits is its ethnic diversity.

At the time of the 1989 census, Moldova's total population was 4,335,400. The largest nationality in the republic, ethnic Moldovans/Romanians, numbered 2,795,000 persons, accounting for 65 percent of the population. The other major nationalities were Ukrainians, about 600,000 (14 percent); Russians, about 562,000 (13.0 percent); Gagauz, about 153,000 (4 percent); Bulgarians, about 88,000 (2 percent); and Jews, about 66,000 (2.0 percent). There were also smaller but appreciable numbers of Belarusians, Poles, Roma (Gypsies), and Germans in the population. In contrast, in Transnistria ethnic Romanians accounted for only 40 percent, of the population in 1989, followed by Ukrainians (28 percent), Russians (25 percent), Bulgarians (2 percent), and Gagauz (1 percent).

In the early 1990s, there was significant emigration from the

republic, primarily from urban areas and primarily by Romanian minorities. In 1990 persons emigrating accounted for 6.8 percent of the population. This figure rose to 10 percent in 1991 before dropping sharply to 2 percent in 1992.

Ethnic Moldovans/Romanians made up a sizable proportion of the urban population in 1989, as well as a large proportion of the rural population (80 percent), but only 23 percent of the ethnic Moldovans lived in the republic's ten largest cities. Many had emigrated to Romania at the end of World War II, and others had lost their lives during the war and in postwar Soviet purges. As a consequence of industrial growth and the Soviet government's policy of diluting and Russifying ethnic Moldovans/Romanians, there was significant immigration to the Moldavian SSR by other nationalities, especially ethnic Russians and Ukrainians.

Mother tongue education for ethnic minorities is a basis for the development of personality, preservation of national identity, preservation and development of national minorities' culture and national minorities' social integration. Therefore, respect for the principle of mother tongue education is an absolute must: this is the basis of non-discrimination of minority children.

State language must be the second one for study because it is one of the

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main conditions of integrating a person in socio-political, economic and cultural life of the republic. Russian should be also obligatory learned, taking into account the long-lasting cultural tradition, geo-political and economic situation of the country.

Alteration of political chart of the world, democratization of Moldovan society favored conscious study of foreign languages as a way of expansion of personal possibilities and a tool of European integration. Mother tongue medium schools or bilingual schools are optimum educational means for implementing this difficult task.

Bilingualism is certainly an ideal way of attaining both the goals of language maintenance of the minority and their political integration. That's why bilingual education and bilingual schools have to be situated in its proper context in our country.



RADIVOJE KONSTANTINOVIC

... Le danger qui menace même les pays où les droits des minorités sont

respectés d'une manière exemplaire est le refus de l'intégration qui mène parfois vers l'autoisolement, voire vers la ghétoïsation. Il va de soi que l'économie d'un Etat souffre de toute forme d'autarcie. Tout en respectant les droits civiques et autres des minorités, prévus par la constitution, qui assurent une coexistence harmonieuse des ethnies différentes, il faut encourager les minorités à s'intégrer non seulement dans la vie économique, mais aussi dans la vie culturelle du pays. Intégrer ne veut pas dire assimiler. Arriver à la tolérance c'est déjà beaucoup, surtout dans les pays qui ont souffert des conflits ethniques. Cependant, dans l'Europe de demain, il faut être beaucoup plus ambitieux : au-delà de la tolérance active il faut encourager la compréhension mutuelle et le rapprochement de la majorité avec ses minorités. C'est à la majorité d'entreprendre des initiatives, mais il faut aussi qu'il y ait, du côté de la minorité, la volonté de sortir de son isolement autrefois souvent imposé, mais de nos jours parfois volontaire. La responsabilité du succès d'une telle entreprise en incombe en grande partie aux pays voisins. Les regards des minoritaires étant toujours tournés vers le pays mère, c'est celui-ci, en fin de compte, qui peut accélérer ou bien freiner le processus de l'intégration de sa minorité dans la vie du pays voisin. Il y a malheureusement beaucoup trop