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**POLITICS AND CULTURE OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES, OTHER THAN
HUNGARIAN, BETWEEN 1990 - 2008**

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ABSTRACT

In Romania, after 1990, ethnic communities have regained the possibility to promote their identity, so that there is, in this respect, a clear spiritual life, which ultimately provides the whole of the wealth of a country.

In the general context, and for the ethnic communities in Romania, The Revolution in December 1989 meant a natural openness to the freedom of asserting their own identity after a long period, that of communism, in which there was the regress of the feeling of belonging to a national minority group. The historic event also made possible the rediscovery of spiritual values, religion, traditions, maternal language, being subsequently promoted in a more and more prominent way.

The role that the members of the ethnic communities in Romania have had for the Revolution to be fulfilled is, undoubtedly, an important one. Their involvement during the Revolution days in major cities such as Bucharest, Timisoara, Sibiu, Constanta, Brasov, Cluj cannot be ignored if we take into consideration that in those areas there are dense ethnic communities. The ideal has been common with that of the majority population, however, minorities also gaining the right to a new affirmation of their own identity. There are numerous examples of members of these minorities, being in the forefront of the political events held in December 1989. In fact, many of them can be found within associations of revolutionaries, some even occupying important positions.

If we were to refer to the Parliament of Romania, we would notice the presence of MPs Nicolae Mircovici (The Union of the Bulgarian in Banat-Romania) and Gheorghe Firczac (The Cultural Union of the Ruthenians in Romania) in the specialty committee, which deals with the problems of the revolutionaries. And, at a local level, there is, undoubtedly, broader representation, which shows, in fact, the increase of the involvement of the members of ethnic communities in the events held in late 1989.

The 20 ethnic groups, without including the majority population, the reference being done only for those present in the Parliament, with historical roots in everything which means the development of time, has undoubtedly brought contribution to what this part of Europe holds as most precious.

Only if we were to relate to the period when the modern Romanian state was established, the interwar period, but especially to the one we are also building, we have sufficient evidence that representatives of these communities influenced beneficially by their simple, often unspectacular, but effective life, the needed progress and civilisation. The openness, including politically, in the last two decades has meant the assertion of personalities belonging to the respective ethnic groups. The Romanian Constitution, not constrained, containing aspects of freedom, as not included in other similar documents in many other states of the world, contains, in Chapter "General Principles", Article 6, Paragraph 1, the following words: "*The State recognises and guarantees the right of people belonging to national minorities to the preservation, development and expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity*". Article 6, paragraph 2 reads: "*The protection measures taken by the Romanian State for the preservation, development and expression of the identity of the people belonging to national minorities shall conform to the principles of equality and non-discrimination in relation to the other Romanian citizens.*"

In the spirit of the statements, there can be inferred the opportunity, seized so far, to complete the image of an ethnic community, including the representation in Parliament. In the first legislature of political Romania, after 1990, representatives of these communities were also elected. At the level of the Department for Interethnic Relations there were 12 communities recognised back then. Naturally, there were 12 Members of Parliament. Listing them represents a necessary reminder: **Tahsin Gemil** (The Democratic Union of Turkish- Muslim Tatars in Romania), **Andrei Echim** (The Community of Lippovans in Romania), **Ingmar Brandsh** (The Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania), **Hechel Matei** (The Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania), **Hogea Amet** (The Democratic Turkish Union in Romania), **Carol-Matei Ivanciov** (The Bulgarian Union in Banat – The Bulgarian Cultural Association in Bucharest), **Antonie Lintmaier** (The Union of Poles in Romania "Dom Polski"), **Anton Nicolau** (The Hellenic Union in Romania), **Gheorghe Răducanu** (The Democratic Union of Roma in Romania), Tcaciuc Stephen (The Union of Ukrainians in Romania), **Varujan Vosganian** (The Union of Armenians in Romania).

In 1992, their number increased, because of the increased number of those who found themselves in terms of identity. Thus, new organisations emerged. Years 1996 and 2000 of the

beginning of legislative mandates solved, not entirely, the problems of those who considered that they belonged to a certain ethnic group. The 2004-2008 mandate meant resizing the 'minority' concept, even though the term is not sometimes received favourably.

2008, in parliamentary terms, meant for specific organisations, as, indeed, for the entire Romanian society, a challenge by introducing a new concept in the general election, referring to the uninominal vote system, voting for a single member. It was a test for the community members as well, to see how much compatriots reported to representative institutions.

Now, 18 Members of Parliament carry on their parliamentary functions in the Romanian Parliament, representing the interests of 19 ethnic communities. The numerical inequality starts from the fact that two communities, Czech and Slovak, have one Member of Parliament. The other apolitical organisations, recognised by the government are: the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania, the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania, The Union of Poles in Romania "Dom Polski", The Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania, The Hellenic Union in Romania, The Union of Ukrainians in Romania, The Association of Macedonians in Romania, The Cultural Union of Ruthenians in Romania, The Association of Italians in Romania, The Democratic Turkish Union in Romania, The Community of Russian Lippovans in Romania, the Union of Armenians in Romania The Association League of Albanians in Romania, The Bulgarian Union in Banat-Romania, The Party of the Roma "Pro Europe", The Union of Serbs in Romania, The Union of Croats in Romania, The Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania.

This thesis aims to highlight the important work of parliamentarians belonging to ethnic communities in Romania. Apart from the fact that specific studies have not been sufficiently published, the approach can be also an example of religious freedoms, aspects found in political statements, in speeches, addressed interpellations and last but not least, in legislative initiatives. The building of a clear, enlightening is aimed at, with practical reference to what has been accomplished, and, why not, what has not been done. There are sufficient documentary sources to complete such an approach. An advantage would be the direct access to the documents in the archive of the Chamber of Deputies. There have also been consulted the materials in major libraries such as the National Library, The University Library, academic libraries, county libraries, municipal ones, and also those in the libraries of the ethnic community organisations.

There is a bibliography, with a sufficient number of works from periodicals published by the cultural organisations of the national minorities such as 'Karadeniz', 'Albanian's Friend', 'Ararat', 'Jewish Reality', 'Polonus', 'Ace of Clubs', continuing with general works of great interest, such as 'The History of Dobrudja' by Adrian Radulescu and Ion Bitoleanu, 'Of the History of Dobrudjan Turks' by Mehmet Ali Ekrem, 'Dobrudjan Magazines' by Ion Faiter and Constanta Calinescu, with special works, such as 'Dobrudja, multicultural geographical area', by Vasile Nicoara , 'The Evolution of Dobrudja between 1918-1944. Contributions to the knowledge of geopolitical, economic, demographic, social and issues and to the political and military life', by Prof. Dr. Valentin Ciorbea, 'The Institutional System of Ethnic Minorities in Romania" by Kiss Denes, and ending with the working tools such as the bibliographies and the published brochures.

It should also be mentioned, though, the essential role of the activity of the parliamentarians belonging to the ethnic groups in Romania, activity particularly developed in the interwar period, even though not at the level of specific organisations, but at the level of doctrinaire political parties as at that time there was not a law to accede to the legislative forum, similar to that of today.

However, the share is represented by the not so distant past, but also by the contemporary aspect. There are interesting things unsaid, and they must be emphasised. In general, political issues are highlighted in their classical meaning, omitting, unfortunately, the issues, often important, about the spiritual life of an ethnic group.

Comments on the parliamentary way of work are certainly developed, so there is a comparative study, in terms of the activity of each and everyone in particular. Of great use are the works published with the support of ethnic unions, as well as the works published by **the Department for Interethnic Relations**. It should be mentioned the fact that, for the presentation of the parliamentary activity of members of the Group of National Minorities, in addition to the Archive of the Romanian Parliament and the Romanian Official Gazette, Part II (1990-2008), the information regarding the specialty committees, friendship groups, speeches, legislative proposals, interpellations and questions is also in electronic format (www.cdep.ro).

The presence of the Members of Parliament in friendship groups is another dimension that undoubtedly deserves approached. In addition, what is called "presence in the territory" cannot be omitted. First of all, the Members of Parliament, regardless of the community they belong to, have represented and will represent the interests of all Romanian citizens. The themes proposed in the speeches from the tribune of **the Chamber of Deputies** are varied: those dedicated to education in the mother tongue, those dedicated to the promotion of culture and traditions as well as those dedicated to religious issues.

There is a systematisation of the whole material, a chapter structure. It is worth mentioning the fact that in Romania a forced ethnical and religious assimilation has not been attempted. The meaning of the Revolution in December 1989, regarding ethnic minorities inclusive, is really special. Naturally, this historic act meant rediscovering the concept of 'identity'. Specific organisations have been founded with the role to primarily promote the knowledge of the truth, the complexity and specific of ethnic communities, to develop the documentary and ethnographic sources, to stimulate the interest in the knowledge of the locality and region where the respective communities live. Last but not least, topics such as parliamentary representation, conducting cultural events, projects still open have been developed. Over the years, In each organisation very significant actions have taken place, culture, education, history and traditions being some of the most important topics.

After a period in which mediatisation was much too low, regarding the contribution of the parliamentarians belonging to ethnic communities, it became clear that a review of attitude was necessary, but also a different approach to the theme, certainly a complex one. The Romanian territory has represented, over the centuries, the place where ethnic communities with different traditions and religions have mingled and lived together, sharing, however, the same values. The number of the members of these communities has increased or decreased, depending on the historic events that have left their mark, in a positive or in a negative way, on the evolution of the state. Thus, we can say that the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century have established the importance, at least numerically, of some ethnic communities, which, nowadays, because of unfavorable historic circumstances, are presented in official statistics with a small number of members.

Population movements, consequences of the two world war, that marked the past century, and of a regime, the communist regime, not friendly at all, in this respect, being consistently within the political landscape, have contributed, in their turn, to the resizing of the whole concept, the assimilation, often occurring, in a forced manner, by closing the schools teaching in minority languages, but by also discouraging the practice of religious traditions. The assimilation process, as well as the migration, many citizens belonging to various ethnic communities settling, in particular, during the communist regime, in other countries, usually in their home countries, have contributed to the phenomenon of population decrease.

There must not be omitted the detail that, in different political regimes, censuses were used differently. For example, before World War I, censuses did not include questions on ethnicity and religion. Reference to one's maternal language as a way to integrate a citizen by ethnicity, was accepted in the twentieth century, not entirely, but by many statisticians. In Romania, the main element of reference was that of nationality, even if in censuses, there were also chapters on maternal language. There have also been different opinions in this direction, because representatives of certain ethnic communities prefer reporting to nationality, as there are also representatives of other ethnic communities who prefer reporting to maternal language. Regarding the former, it is clear that at the level of ethnicity, their maternal language is no longer spoken, the linguistic identity element having disappeared.

There is, today, a difference between parliamentary representation of ethnic communities and census data. The difference is that certain ethnic groups, who are represented in Parliament, do not appear in the census data. Thus, the following communities have parliamentary representation: Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Jewish, German, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Hungarian, Polish, Romani, Russian-Lippovan, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovak, Tatar, Turkish, Ukrainian. Apart from the Hungarian community, in census data, following communities are mentioned: Armenian, Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Jewish, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Romani, Russian (separately), Lippovan (separately), Serbian, Slovak, Tatar, Turkish, Ukrainian, Csango, Chinese. Consequently, these differences can be seen in the latter category appeared in new ethnic communities, such as the Lippovan, the Csango, and the Chinese communities, but disappearing communities, such as the Albanian, the Macedonian and the Ruthenian communities.

During the census held in 2002, the following categories regarding ethnicity were passed as answers: 1) Romanians, 2) Magyars, Hungarians, 3) Romanis, Gypsies, 4) German, Germans, 5) Ukrainians, Hutsuls, 6) Serbs, Yugoslavs, 7) Turks 8) Tatars, 9) Slovaks, 10) Hebrew, Israelites, 11) Russians, 12) Lippovans 13) Bulgarians, 14) Czechs 15) Croatians 16) Greek, Hellenes 17) Poles, 18) Armenians, 19) Slovenians, 20) Saxons, 21) Swabians, 22) Macedo-Romanians, 23) A-Romanians, 24) Seklers, 25) Ruthenians, 26) Krashovans, 27) Italians 28) Chinese, 29) Albanians, 30) Gagauzes, 31) Slav Macedonians, 32) Csango, 33) other EU ethnicities 34) other ethnic groups from Europe, 35) other non-European ethnic groups, 36) unreported.

An important dimension of promoting ethnic, as well as religious identity, is the reference as percentage to the total population of Romania. Censuses have proven so far and will certainly prove that there are members of a community stating that belong to that community, but declaring another maternal language.

It must be noted that reference is done only to the last officially census in 2002, the data of the census held in 2011 not yet being centralised. The data provided by the media regarding the census held in 2011 presents a complex picture in terms of the demographic process, the changes in the period 2002-2011 being substantial, the main detail, beyond sociological aspects, being established that population decreased remarkably. This decrease, in percentage terms, applies to all ethnic categories, with one exception, the Roma community, which is in a phase of demographic growth.

Regarding the Tatar community in Romania, unfortunately, it appears that the number of members decreased dramatically, from 23,935 as the 2002 census showed, to 20,464 in 2011. The causes are numerous, with common factors: diminution of birth rates, increased mortality, population migration, many young people preferring to settle in other countries, mainly in Europe. As far as we are concerned, the phenomenon of assimilation can also be added in the specific section, as well as the declaration of another ethnic group, such as the Turkish ethnicity. The lack of awareness of these issues is, and most importantly, will be dangerous, as there is the real problem, of losing, in time, the spiritual values. This is why any call to stop such a process is necessary, the formal promotion of the Tatar language in public education being an essential way of maintaining identity.

According to the data shown in the following tables, disproportions between ethnic groups can be seen in terms of knowledge of the native language, but also of the awareness of reference to one's own linguistic identity. The causes of this situation are numerous, the most important one being whether or not there are schools where teaching is done in the maternal language.

An important aspect in the existence of ethnic communities in Romania is undoubtedly the establishment of specific organisations. We might even speak of a resumption in the spirit of the law, of the process of promotion of the values of one's own ethno-religious identity, taking into account the fact that, particularly in the interwar period, there were such organizations, representative for national minorities.

The communist period imposed, unfortunately, from this point of view, the end of the reference to certain spiritual values, preferring empty, artificial patterns, unable to reproduce the diversity and the charm of spiritual heritage.

Causing the return to normality, 1990 represented the administrative reorganisation of national minorities included, by creating institutions that have protected their interests. In fact, most such institutions are present even today in the Romanian society were established during that year. Their status foresees that they are ethno-confessional organisations, with the role to primarily preserve and transmit cultural values.

12 in number (**the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania, Community of Russian Lippovans in Romania, the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania, The Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania, The Democratic Turkish Union in Romania, The Bulgarian Union IN Banat – The Bulgarian Cultural Association in Bucharest, The Union of Poles in Romania ‘Dom Polski’, The Hellenic Union in Romania, the Democratic Union of Roma in Romania, The Union of Ukrainians in Romania, the Union of Armenians in Romania**), at the beginning of the last decade, the organisations, called, in most cases, ‘unions’, are identified as an image, with all the 19 national historic minorities present in Romania. I state that my paper does not refer, in this respect, to **the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania**, which has a special status, the respective organization being regarded, at least in Parliament, as a political party.

In the period 1992-1996, in addition to the 12 organisations represented in Parliament, in the previous legislature, there also appeared **the Italian community in Romania**. There was an increase in the number of organizations represented in the Chamber of Deputies, so that in the 1996-2000 legislature, 15 Members of the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities were active in the following organizations: The Union of Armenians in Romania, The Union of Poles in Romania 'Dom Polski', The Community of Italians in Romania, The Russian Lippovan Community in Romania, The Hellenic Union in Romania, the Democratic Union of Serbs and Krashovans in Romania, The Cultural Union of Albanians in Romania, The Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, The Union of Ukrainians in Romania, The Democratic Turkish Union in Romania, the Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania, 'Bratstvo' Community of Bulgarians in Romania, the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania, The Roma Party, The Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania.

Since 2000, 2 new organisations have been created and are represented in the Parliament of Romania: The Cultural Union of Ruthenians in Romania and the Association of Macedonians in Romania.

Regarding the desired objects, the idea of attachment to national values is the starting point, the details emphasizing details the other landmarks: supporting youth aspirations, helping the elderly, who are deprived of the possibility of a decent life, developing the creative spirit.

In fact, the most complex chapter contains practically all parliamentary activity of all those who, after 1990, have represented the ethnic communities in Romania: their speeches, political statements, interpellations, legislative initiatives, meaning all political instruments that a Member of Parliament has at his disposal. A deputy representing an ethnic group surely has the freedom to cover with his work other areas of social life as well, most putting this into practice. In this paper, speeches on general issues of all Romanian citizens are reported, because it must be emphasized the fact that these Members of Parliament represented not only the ethnic communities they belonged to, but also the inhabitants of the areas where they lived.

In this paper, however, the addressed interpellations, the speeches from the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies, the political statements were selected, being mentioned only those related to ethnic communities or to collaborative relationships that Romania has with the native

countries of the respective officials. Thus, those interested in this issue may notice a very important domain, which refers to ethnic communities.

It should be noted that this chapter does not analyse the political activity of the representatives of the Hungarian community, a community, which, in the mandates after 1989, has been well represented in the Parliament of Romania, having working groups both in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate. The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania participates in local and parliamentary elections as well as to the European Parliament in the same conditions as with doctrinaire political parties, so they need to overcome the 5% threshold. A large study, which should represent the starting point of another research paper, must be written separately. In this paper, we analyse only the speeches of Members of the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities, others than Hungarian.

In the 2000-2004 legislature, after the legalisation of the approaches of some representatives of ethnic communities, 18 Members of Parliament activated: Metin Cerchez (The Democratic Turkish Union in Romania), Varujan Pambuccian (The Union of Armenians in Romania), George Firczak (The Cultural Union of Ruthenians in Romania), Negiat Sali (The Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania), Ana Florea (The Democratic Union of Czechs and Slovaks in Romania), Slavomir Gvozdenovici (The Union of Serbs in Romania), Sotiris Fotopolos (The Hellenic Union of Romania), Ghervazen Longher (The Union of Poles in Romania 'Dom Polski'), Miron Ignat (The Community of Russian Lippovans in Romania), Dorin Marian (The Community of Jewish Federations in Romania), Oana Manolescu (The Association League of Albanians in Romania) Nicolae Paun (The Roma Party), Mihai Radan (The Union of Croatians in Romania), Vasile Ioan Savu (The Association of Macedonians in Romania), Peter Mirciov (The Bulgarian Union in Banat, Romania), Ileana Stana-Ionescu (The Italian Community in Romania), Stefan Tcaciuc (The Union of Ukrainians in Romania), Eberhard-Wolfgang Wittstock (The Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania), Iohan-Peter Babias (The Union of Poles in Romania 'Dom Polski'). In this enumeration, the last mentioned MP is Peter Babias, who represented the Polish community in the Romanian Parliament until 2002, when he died, , his place being taken by Ghervazen Longher.

The leader of the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities was occupied by Varujan Pambuccian, vice-Leaders were Sotiris Fotopolos and Dorin Marian and secretary, as of September 2, 2002, was Peter Mirciov, who replaced late Iohan-Peter Babias

In the legislature 2004-2008 legislature, the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities consisted of the following: Iusein Ibram (The Democratic Turkish Union in Romania), Varujan Pambuccian (The Union of Armenians in Romania), Miron Ignat (The Community of Russian Lippovans in Romania) Aledin Amet (The Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania), Ghervazen Longher (The Union of Poles in Romania 'Dom Polski'), Stefan Buciuta (The Union of Ukrainians in Romania), Adrian Miroslav Merka (The Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania), Sotiris Fotopolos (The Hellenic Union of Romania), Aurel Vainer (The Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania), Liana Dumitrescu (The Association of Macedonians in Romania), Slavomir Gvozdenovici (The Union of Serbs in Romania), Mihai Radan (The Union of Croats in Romania), Oana Manolescu (The Association League of Albanians in Romania) Nicolae Paun (The Social Democratic Roma Party in Romania), Stefan Tcaciuc (The Union of Ukrainians in Romania), Nicholas Mircovici (The Bulgarian Union in Banat, Romania), Dragos Zisopol (Hellenic Union of Romania), Mircea Grosaru (Association of Italians in Romania -RO.AS.IT), Ovidiu Gant (The Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania), George Firczak (The Cultural Union of Ruthenians in Romania). In 2008, Dragos Zisopol replaced late Sotiris Fotopolos, who repr by Stephen Buciuta esented the Hellenic community, and late Stefan Tcaciuc in 2005.

The leader of the Group of National Minorities was Varujan Pambuccian, vice-leaders were Iusein Ibram and Ghervazen Longher and secretary was Mircea Grosaru as of September 4, 2006. Aurel Vainer was vice-leader, untilFebruary 1, .2005, and late Liana Dumitrescu served as secretary until September 4, 2006.

A nation is identified in history, with several key milestones, such as maternal language, religion, traditions. A nation is eternal, only if it preserves and promotes their own identity. Therefore, in many countries there is a particular concern for such an important area called, generically, 'spiritual life'. Government policies are constructed so that culture and education are priority, allocating significant funds for their protection.

Naturally, for a minority, especially for a national minority, the main objective is keeping the two identities, ethnic and religious. In Romania, as already stated, the necessary framework has been formed in this regard, the necessary legislation being permissive. After 1990, the representative organisations have developed a complex activity, with special emphasis on printing books in their maternal language, editing magazines and newspapers, as well as organising cultural, but also with religious character. Their multitude is surely different from one community to another, the difference being made by some important aspects, such as number of the members of a community and the material support they benefit from.

Popular traditions have their charm, fulfilling, in a happy way the Romanian culture as a whole. Folk groups, established within organisations, are meant to carry on these traditions, young artists demonstrating at the level of the ethnic communities, that there are desire, devotion and talent. Every year the already famous takes place with the participation of foreign groups. Such an event is organised by the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania, and it takes place in early September. Certainly, similar performances take place at the initiative of various institutions in many other representative.localities

THE TATAR AND TURKISH COMMUNITY IN ROMANIA

The history of the Tatar and Turkish communities in Dobrogea area is very old, the reference being made to events which took place over hundreds of years, throughout the entire area. The first signs of the presence of Tatars in Dobrudja is the thirteenth century. In chronicles it is mentioned the fact that 100,000 Tatars settled in this area during the reign of Timur Lenk. 1525 and 1596 are the years when other groups of Tatars settled in the territory, which, at that time, was part of the Ottoman Empire. In 1783, The Crimean Peninsula was annexed by Tsarist Russia, a dramatic moment for the Tatars, many of them being forced to flee to the region between the Danube and the Black Sea included. The same happened after The Crimean War (1853-1856). Following the Peace Treaty in Berlin (1878), Dobrogea becomes Romanian territory, the Tatar community, however, promoting their own identity, even after the political changes occurred.

The Turkish community had a history in this area, relatively identical to that of the Tatar ethnicity. In 1264, 12,000 soldiers led by Sultan Izeyddin Keykavuz II, at the order of Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus, to defend the border of the Byzantine Empire, arrived in northern Dobrudja of today, founding Babadag, which, in translation into Turkish, means ‘father of the mountains’. Being for hundreds of years part of the Ottoman Empire, it is obvious that important communities of Turks, particularly from the area of Anatolia, have established, over time, in this province.

During 1920-1989, in Romania, Tatar and Turkish communities created and developed a strong education system and media in their native languages, able to meet the requirements of knowledge and cultural fulfillment. Those were the years when the entire cultural activity witnessed significant progress, even if, after World War II, it suffered a major ideological influence, namely the communist one. The presence of a large elitist group, who came from the Tatar and Turkish communities and who involved in various progressive activities, justify a media and an education which, in the interwar period, definitely grew in quality.

Journalism in Tatar and Turkish states through a permanent innovative attitude, advocating for the awareness of their own creative values. It is the period when the work of young Turks becomes more and more present, especially in Dobrudja.

Promoting values in all areas of social life has been an essential element to what means historical continuity. The names of great personalities worth mentioning are: Agiemin Baubec, Ali Bekmambet, Nuredin Ibram, Tahsin Gemil, Ismail Ziyaedin, Kerim Altay, Kemal Karpat, Enver Mahmut, Nedret Mahmut, Yaşar Memedemin, Fikret Mujdaba, Cadriye Nurmambet, Nevzat Yusuf Sarigol, Nusfet Sagan, Mustecib Ulkusal, Negip Hagi Fazal, Vani Mehmed Yurtsever, Irfan Ismail and, last but not least, Selim Abdulachim, a renowned lawyer, elected MP for three times, in the interwar period, who, in a speech in the Parliament plenary on 5 December 1924, said that the departure Tatars and Turks in Romania is a ‘national danger’.

The folk groups have been those which represent the community artistically, their attendance at various festivals, both national and international, proving that there is particular concern, in this respect. ‘**Boztorgay**’ Choir, ensembles ‘**Karasu**’ from Medgidia, ‘**Kaytarma**’ from Valu lui Traian Commune, ‘**Caşlar**’ from Mangalia, ‘**Karadeniz**’ from Constanta, ‘**Kara**

Murat Yâldâzlar' from Mihail Kogalniceanu Commune, but also the ensembles from Techirghiol, Basarabi, Ovidiu, Cobadin were created precisely to support the cultural identity of the ethnic group.

After 1990, Romanian education has been through many changes, some beneficial, others, however, inconclusive, leaving room for interpretation. The whole methodology of teaching school subjects was rethought. The context has certainly imposed this gesture, especially since an opening in the field was necessary. Such an approach can surely be commented upon and applied.

History is undoubtedly the national existence itself. History can claim the other landmarks as well, such as language, religion, traditions.

There was great respect in schools for the study of that respective discipline. The curriculum included a significant number of hours devoted to national history and world history. Unfortunately, this is no longer valid. Class attendance has decreased, which has led to less thorough preparation. The passion for modern science can be understood to a certain point. Progress demands its rights and it is natural to be given. However, the knowledge of the past must not be neglected. A correct combination in a balanced curriculum can not only be beneficial to pupils. As optional items and, where necessary, mandatory, aspects from the historic past of ethnic communities in Romania must be known.

The Turkish and Tatar language education has been, along with Islam, the key to maintaining its own identity. Both before World War I and the interwar period in the network of mother tongue education was well-structured, the renowned intellectuals of the two communities having a well-defined role.

Also, education is a priority for the representatives of both organisations. The process is complex in both the status of the Democratic Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania and in that of the Democratic Turkish Union in Romania, special articles specifying this issue. Moreover, UDTTMR as an institution has assumed this role, of promoting Turkish language as mother tongue at the level of the Romanian state education. There is, in this respect, collaboration at the level of some schools, such as School no.12 'Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu' in Constanța. Moreover, the interest is general, the numerous classes in the schools in the rural communities

where there are Tatar and Turkish communities, Turkish language is taught. A positive example is ‘Kemal Ataturk’ High School in Medgidia, high school founded in 1995, renamed ‘Kemal Ataturk’ National College, in the 2000-2001 school year, and which is intended as a continuation of the former local Muslim Seminary, a prestigious educational institution, closed, unfortunately, in 1967. The bilingual Romanian-Turkish kindergarten ‘Zubeyde Hanim’ in Constanta has developed with regard to the educational process, from one year to another. Therefore, for the Tatars and Turks in Romania, there are all stages of preparation in Turkish, from pre-school, followed by primary, secondary, and, last but not least, the university, because at the University of Bucharest and ‘Ovidius’ University in Constanta there are departments of Turkish language.

Religion is an essential element for the existence of a nation. Islam, as a system of education in schools, has an old tradition in Romania, even if this aspect is not well-known. The Muslim Seminary, founded in Babadag and transferred to Medgidia, in the early twentieth century, was a true sanctuary of promoting the spiritual values of Islam, generations of graduates standing out primarily thorough preparation, and the passion they showed.

The communist regime in the late 60s, because of bizarre reasons that only a totalitarian system implements, the school was closed down, thus vanishing a set of concepts, built over time, with many efforts.

After 1989, when resizing an entire organization system, religious education has become again a school subject. ‘Mustafa Kemal Ataturk’ High School was founded in Medgidia, as a continuation of the old seminary, the high school having a department of Islamic theology. In addition, within certain schools, especially in Constanta County, classes, in which that respective discipline is taught, have been formed. Unfortunately, lately, the specialist teachers have not manifested the same interest. The causes are multiple, correct analysis being undoubtedly necessary.

At the level of the Muslim community, there is the idea of a department of Islamic theology being established at ‘Ovidius’ University in Constanta.

In Romania, the Muslim community, consisting mainly of ethnic Tatars and Turks, is representative, at the level of population.

Islam has preserved its peculiarity primarily because places of worship were preserved. The Islamic theological education developed particularly in the interwar period. After the seminary was moved from Babadag to Medgidia it can be said that a special emulation was created, numerous personalities attending the lectures of the prestigious educational institution. They are, however, only at the high school level. A specialised department in a university is required.

Young Muslims will thus have the opportunity to study in Romania. This issue is desired, with the belief that the support needed to complete the initiative will be received.

For hundreds of years in this part of Europe, in the Dobroudja region, Islam has been well-preserved, Tatars and Turks being the ones who have kept it and keep it unaltered, the contribution to the preservation of identity being essential.

Several mosques, especially in Constanta and Tulcea Counties have been built, at least in recent years, The old typical buildings were reinforced and new religious places are to be built.

There is undoubtedly an important activity in terms of achieving these objectives, the examples I am going to present being illustrative.

Thus, mosques were built in Lazu, Năvodari, Ovidiu, and Constanta. The mosques in Pecineaga, 23 August, Siliștea were restored and the mosques in Cumpăna, Castelu, Valu lui Traian, Valea Seaca are to be completed. Moreover, the cornerstone for the new mosque was laid in Mihail Kogalniceanu Commune.

The concern of the representatives of the Muslim community in Romania to preserve religious traditions is undoubtedly true.

Both religious and secular holidays retain its uniqueness, and substance being well-preserved in the collective memory of the Muslims in Romania. The two main Islamic religious festivals, Ramadan Bayram and Kurban Bayram, do not have fixed dates. Ramadan Bayram or the Sweet Celebration of Ramadan (Seker Bayram) is preceded by a period of fasting, which lasts 30 days. During the three-day holiday, sweets are especially served, elderly relatives are visited, Muslims go to the cemetery (mezarlâk) to clean up the graves of the deceased. On the first day of the feast, men go to the mosque to attend the religious service.

The other holiday, Kurban Bayram, follows after 2 months and 10 days. During this holiday, rams are sacrificed, the meat being shared to people, only a quarter being kept for their own family consumption. As in the previous celebration, wishes are health- "Bayramânâz kairlâ bolsân" ('May the Feast bring you accomplishments!').

The Muslim community in Romania, as in the case of all Turkic peoples, celebrates the two non-religious events: 'Nevruz' and 'Hâdârlez', two ancient celebrations (over 5,000 years), from the pre-Islamic period, having spring as symbol. The word 'Nevruz' is based on two Persian words, 'nevus' ('new') and 'Ruz' ('day'), thus, in translation meaning 'the new day'. In Romania, the event is celebrated on March 21, in other parts of the Turanic world, the time of the celebration being different. The custom is that young people go to carol singing, with a branch adorned with flowers, handkerchiefs, in order to proclaim the coming of spring. Old clothes are thrown into fire and new ones are bought. Homes are cleaned and relatives and friends are visited.

'Hâdârlez' is celebrated in early May, being an event as old as the former, people enjoying the beauty of nature. Therefore, people go out and have a good time, light being a reason for this joy.

THE ALBANIAN COMMUNITY

There is evidence of the presence of Albanians in the Romanian territory ever since the late sixteenth century. Thus, a document signed on 12/24 March 1595, by the emissary of Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II specifies that Michael the Brave allowed 15,000 Albanians to settle north of the Danube. Over the next hundred years because of the complicated political situation in the region, a large number of Albanians settled in the Romanian territory, as evidenced by official documents issued by the Romanian rulers as did, in 1602, the ruler Simon Movilă, who spared the Albanians from tributes and taxes over a period of ten years, in Călinești Village (Prahova County today). According to written testimony, an important Albanian community is reported in Bucharest in 1628.

Spiritual life within the Albanian community has certainly been appreciated, given the fact that numerous personalities distinguished themselves in the Romanian space. The activity of Princess Elena Ghica (1828-1888), should be noted, who became known using the pen name of

Dora d'Istria. The work of the novelist of Albanian origin was rich, supporting the Albanians' national cause. She published in Florence in 1873 the monograph 'Gli Albanesi in Rumenia', an incursion in the history of the Albanians in Romania.

Recent history shows that cultural activity has not diminished, just got another dimension, taking into account the material possibilities, much more generous, offered since 2001, to the Association 'League of Albanians' by the Government of Romania, thus achieving the quantum leap, compared with earlier periods, without neglecting, however, the qualitative aspect.

At the level of the League of Albanians there is an intense activity in terms of promoting their image through culture. A remarkable achievement is having their own publishing house, 'The Look' Publishing House as important as the editing of 'Albanian's Friend' Magazine

Education in Albanian language takes place in cultural associations within community programmes. There is no state education.

A noteworthy aspect regarding the institutional branch is the management of the entire community issues. In addition to the representative organisation, the Association 'League of Albanians', there also are other institutions, most of which with cultural character: The Cultural Union of Albanians in Romania, The song and dance ensemble "Serenade" The Albanian Women Circle.

THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

The history of the Armenian community in the Romanian territory is very old, dating from the first official document in the eleventh century, when the presence of Armenian merchants is reported in Moldavia. The Diocese of Armenian Churches is established in Suceava in 1401.

In Wallachia, the Armenian community also emerged in the fourteenth century, its members settling in cities like Pitesti, Craiova, Bucharest, where, an Armenian school was also founded in 1800.

Regarding Transylvania, one can say that there is plenty evidence of community presence ever since the late tenth century and early eleventh century, continuing, naturally, with the following centuries, as there is the document signed in 1281 by the Hungarian King Louis IV, stating "Terra Armenorum". Armenian merchants founded in this province, several localities such as Dumbrăveni (Elisabethpolis) and Gherla (Armenopolis). The presence of a colony of Armenians in the kingdom is marked by Hungarian chroniclers Simon de Kezai and Thuroczi, during the reign of Duke Geza and King Stephen I (997-1038).

There is a pleiad of intellectuals of Armenian origin, who distinguished themselves in different areas in the Romanian territory: Gheorghe Asachi, Vasile Conta, Garabet Ibraileanu, Virgil Madgearu, Manuc Bey Mirzaian, Anda Calugareanu, Garbis Zobian, John Kassargian, Cik Damadian, Arax Sâvagian, K. Zambaccian, Grigore Trancu-Iasi, Ana Aslan, dr. Dumitru Bagdasar.

Dobrudja area has been generous in terms of the presence of ethnic communities. Other names are worth mentioning in this regard: Berdj-Sant Aşgian, Krikor Pambuccian, Garabet Kumbetlian, Aram Frenkian, Ion O. Balasanian, Haig Acterian Ohanes Bedighian, Aram Agop, Varujan Cozâghian, Harry Tavitian, Vartan Arachelian, Arabela Sena Aprahamian Negulescu, Diradurian Ara, Levon Marcarian, Boiagian Zaven, Hrant Torosian, Armenac Manissalian.

THE BULGARIAN COMMUNITY

The events in the Balkans, in the Middle Ages, made that a large Bulgarian community, especially in Ciprovți and Nikopole, areas to settle in the north of the Danube. The main occupations were crafts and gardening. A significant Bulgarian community can be found in the Banat region.

Just like in the case of the Armenians, and members of the Bulgarian ethnicity founded, over time, several localities such as Vinga, Dudeștii Vechi, Telepa, Denta, Brestea. The historical facts made that in the twentieth century, part of the Bulgarian population in Romania be able to return to the motherland, as was the case with the inhabitants of Dudeștii Vechi, who established settlements such as Gostilia, Bărdarski Gheran, Dragomirovo, and the case of those from Vinga, who settled in Asenovo.

A major coordinate, valid for all ethnic communities in Romania, is the organisation of artistic events aimed at promoting their spiritual values thereof. Naturally, the Bulgarian community could not be absent within the local branches representing the ensembles, especially folklore, in order to provide the others an accurate image regarding traditions.

This ethnicity is also well-promoted through the printing of books of real interest, but also by editing publications such as 'Nasa Glas' ('Our Voice'), 'Literaturna miselj' ('Literary Thought') and "UBB –R Newsletter", meaning the Newsletter of The Union of Bulgarians in Banat-Romania.

The editorial work has been intense, numerous volumes being published in Bulgarian: Mihai Eminescu. Poems translated in Bulgarian by Professor Carol-Matei Ivanciov, Proverbs and sayings. Prof. Carol-Matei Ivanciov and Ana Carolina Ivanciov, Short Stories, by Stefan Velciov, Internment concentration camp. Pages from Baragan concentration camp (1951-1956). Bulgarian-Romanian bilingual volume of Rafael Mirciov, Bulgarian Folklore from Banat, vol I – Folk songs. Collected and recorded by Prof. Carol-Matei Ivanciov, Bulgarian Folklore from Banat, vol II Paroemiological. Proverbs and sayings. by Prof. Carol-Matei Ivanciov and Ana Carolina Ivanciov; Izdanqi (Twigs). Volume of poems composed by Professor Carol-Matei Ivanciov; Stapunqi u ` nipuzn (Steps into the Unknown). Volume of poems composed by Toni Uzun, Tabletqi (Tablets). Short stories by Stefan Velciov; Mojta, manena Biblija (My Little Bible). Children's Bible, Brestea, 150 years. Bulgarian-Romanian bilingual Monograph of the Brestea, Village, Timis County, Prof. Anton Manea.

Holidays are old, with references to historical facts. Thus, Bulgarians wear during March, spring brooch-like trinkets, to be safe from trouble. Another important event in the calendar of popular holidays, is Baba Marta, who symbolizes the coming of spring.

Regarding schools, as with other ethnic communities, churches and parishes were established, so that later, after on, the emergence of new schools, a clear distinction between the religious and the secular areas should be made. The system is mixed, meaning that, in addition to common subjects, Bulgarian language and literature are taught in the schools Vinga, Brestea and Dudeștii Vechi. ‘History and Traditions of Bulgarian Minority’ school subject was introduced in the 2005-2006 school year.

History records that, regarding the Croatian community, there are three stages of immigration. The first stage is during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when several groups of Croats in the north-western part of Bosnia, settled Resita Town of today in several areas: Cltocici (Klokotic), Carașova (Karasevo), Nermed (Nermic), Lupac (Lupak) Rafnic (Ravnic), Iabalcea (Jabalce) Vodnic (Vodnik).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries during the Ottoman rule, other Croatian groups settled in the aforesaid localities. These Croatian were known as ‘Crayfish’ or ‘Sokti’. The third group of Croatians settled in the early nineteenth century in Checea and Cenei localities, its members being the gentry descendants of the Croatian small nobility, transferred due to the reorganisation of the Habsburg Empire.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Historical research demonstrates the presence of Jewish communities in this region since the second century AD. Community presence is reported in the twelfth century, precisely in 1165, when the traveller Benjamin from Tudela mentions the good relations of cooperation between the Vlahs from south of the Danube and the Jewish population.

In Transylvania the presence ethnic group is certified from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the fourteenth century, there was, according to the documents, the White Fortress, a major Jewish community. And in the following centuries a more and more active presence of this ethnic group is noted in the cultural, social and economic life in the Romanian territory.

THE GERMAN COMMUNITY

The presence of the German community in the Romanian territory is old, its members significantly contributing to the historic course of the the Romanian nation. In the tenth – thirteenth centuries, the first group of Saxons were settled in Transylvania, at the initiative of King Geza II. Their colonisation process continued in the following centuries as well.

With regard to Swabians, in accordance with the existing documents it can be seen that their presence is certified since the eighteenth century, their colonisation being done in three stages and ending after seven decades.

Folk traditions are unquestionably ancient and varied. In this respect, there are some illustrative examples, such as "Fasching", the festival organised on Ash Wednesday and 'The Confirmation', event which takes place on Palm Sunday (Palmsontag), and which is of great importance, especially for Lutheran Evangelists.

THE GREEK COMMUNITY

With regard to the Greek ethnicity, it can be said that the history of its presence is not only old, but also rich in facts. The first Greek colonies, such as Tomis (Constanta), Istria (Histria), Callatis (Mangalia), were established in antiquity, helping to promote their own civilisation.

The Byzantine period represented another phase of the establishment of Greek communities in the Romanian territory. The merchants were the ones who developed trade relations, coming from the economic centres of the Ottoman Empire: Constantinople, Castoria, Melenic, Trapezunt, Ianina, Tarnovo, Filipopol. Also, many Greek merchants came from other areas such as Crete, the Aegean and Ionian Islands.

Cultural exchanges between Greece and Romania at the beginning of the last century were, qualitatively, but also quantitatively, different, exemplifying, in this context, the translations from the Greek 'Anthology Greek Poetry' (1800 -1930) and 'Anthology of Greek

Lyrical Poetry'. They are certainly not the only examples. A writer translated into Greek is Panait Istrati.

THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY

The first Italians who settled in Romanian provinces were those who dealt with business. A consistent presence of the members of this ethnic group was felt in the seventeenth century, when the Romanian rulers invited many craftsmen, stone cutters, painters, builders, architects to construct several buildings. There also settled a large number of intellectuals.

In the past 20 years, several books have been published, most referring to the history of the Italian community. 'Column' Magazine holds a special place, publish both in Italian and Romanian.

THE MACEDONIAN COMMUNITY

The first documents, that certify the presence of the Macedonian community in the current territory of Romania, date from around 1300. In the following centuries Macedonian groups continued to settle north of the Danube, thus forming a strong community. The involvement of some members of the ethnic group in the revolutionary movement of Tudor Vladimirescu is an undeniable historic fact.

Representative for the community of Slav Macedonians in Romania, in this field, are the publishing house, founded in 2001, and the magazine, also established in 2001, both entitled 'Macedonian'. There should also be noted that, in 2003 and 2004, there were printed manuscripts of important personalities within the community. Several audio materials were also made (cassettes, CDs).

THE POLISH COMMUNITY

Just like in the case of other ethnic communities, regarding Poles as well, it can be said that their history in this region, is old. There is information ever since the thirteenth century about their presence in Transylvania. After 1772, when Poland was divided, several groups of Poles were established in Moldavia because in 1792 the Austrian authorities allowed a total of 20 families to settle in the area Cacica locality. In 1834, several Polish families founded New Solonețul locality. An important colony in Valea Jiului was formed at the beginning of the last century, consisting of the miners who came from Silesia and around Tarnow community.

THE ROMA COMMUNITY

The Roma presence in this area is certified since 1385, esxistând, however, there being opinions that this presence would be much older. For many centuries, the Roma were slaves, being freed in the early nineteenth century, in the context of cultural revolutions in Europe. The Roma community becomes totally free in 1855 in Moldavia, and in 1856 in Wallachia. At least in numerical terms, the Roma community is important, having a well-organised system of printing magazines and books. The community's publication is called 'Ace of Clubs'.

THE RUSSIAN LIPPOVAN COMMUNITY

The first group of Russian Lipovans settled in Moldavia, Wallachia and Dobrudja, in the late seventeenth century. However, there are different opinions of some specialists, regarding the adherence of Dobrudjan Russian Lipovans considering that they would be tied to community Non-Krashovan Cassacks. Following an agreement of Emperor Joseph II, after the annexation of Bukovina (1775), Lipovans in this region were freed from military service and some taxes. There is a large amount of data regarding the presence of the community in the eighteenth

century in localities such as Manolea (Suceava County) Dumasca (Vaslui County), Brătești, Bălășești, Lespezi, Harlau, Roman, Piatra Neamț, Târgu Frumos, Botoșani.

The Russian Lipovan community is undoubtedly a community in which cultural activity is a priority. The large number of personalities who have contributed to the spiritual welfare, image promotion, stand proof in this respect, having a truly elitist character.

THE RUTHENIAN COMMUNITY

The Ruthenians, also known in history as Rusyns, are part of the Slavic branch, territory to which they report to being Transcarpathia Region, with large communities in Ukraine, Slovakia and Poland. Over time, several projects have been proposed policy which, once realised, would have led to the creation of autonomous regions of Ruthenians. It is worth mentioning, in this respect, the important effort of an important personality, Adolf Dobrianskij. In 1818 the National Rusyn Councils were established in Presov, Sighet and Ungvar localities. Unfortunately, all these efforts did not materialise, the Ruthenians remained scattered in Central and Eastern Europe.

THE SERBIAN COMMUNITY

Some important historic events such as the defeat of Christian peoples' armies by the Ottoman army in Kosovopolje (Blackbird Field) in 1389, but also the collapse of the Serbian Kingdom in 1459 were the reasons for the migration of the Serbs in the provinces north of the Danube. In the following centuries, this migration has continued, particularly in Banat and Crișan areas, 1690 being, in this sense, considered a reference year.

The Romanian territory meant, for the Serbian community, the place where there were created programmes to promote their identity through culture, education, religion, politics.

THE SLOVAK AND CZECH COMMUNITIES

These communities, with a long history in the Romanian territory, settled after several stages of migration, early Slovaks arriving in 1747, when they established Mocrea locality. Slovaks also established Budoi, Șerani, Făgeu, Sinteu localities. In the nineteenth century, groups of Slovaks settled in Nadlac Brestovat, Vucova, Butin, Poiana Micului and Solonet localities.

A priority for the representative organisation of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania is the printing of books in their mother tongue, but also in Romanian, books that promote the two dimensions of identity, regarding ethnicity and religion. There have been numerous titles of volumes proposed, with leading figures of their ethnic group as authors. The Ministry of Culture in Slovakia has given special support to culture, consisting of financial aid included, undoubtedly necessary to a much more comprehensive approach of the topic.

THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY

The Ukrainian community is also stated to have an ancient history in this region. Documents have certified its presence in northern areas of the country such as Maramures and Bukovina, ever since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

A community so important, at least numerically, as is the Ukrainian community, has managed, over time, to distinguish itself culturally as well. When discussing literature, there is always reference to the writer Taras Sevcenko, a classic of the Ukrainian literature.

This paper attempts to capture only some of the aspects of what has represented is and will certainly represent the creative spirit of the members of ethnic communities in Romania. The addressed aspects include the period before World War I but also the interwar period, the communist period, with many restrictions, primarily in the education in the mother tongue, and especially the period after 1989, when there started a real rediscovery of their ethnic and religious affiliations. Published books and studies fundamentally contribute to the development of the image of the ethnic groups with ancient roots in Romania.

If I refer only to the Tatar community, as a representative, I can say that our history and the contributions we have made to achieve progress in Romania, are sufficient reasons to continue such an activity.

After 1878, when Dobrudja becomes Romanian territory, context in which a significant Tatar community would be within the borders of a preponderant Christian state, the local population would demonstrate their loyalty to the new country, as evidenced subsequently by participating among the Romanian military, the two World Wars and, most importantly, the development of Romanian spirituality. We can equally talk about the beneficial conservatism that this population has cultivated in the sense of preserving and transmitting traditions and maternal language. I stated in my paper, 'the Tatar community in Romania' in order to dispel the myth of the existence of this ethnic group only in Dobrudja area, myth developed so far. Many Tatars, especially those refugees from Crimea after 1944, have settled in different Romanian towns such as Sibiu, Brasov, Targu-Mures. Some of these Tatars have not forgotten their native language.

Other ethnic communities have been in the Tatars' situation. New generations of historians have the duty to carry on the work of their predecessors, in order to maintain the interest for the past, present and future of these national minorities. In this respect, significant research is further needed.

KEY WORDS

- Parliament
- ethnic communities Members of Parliament
- Culture and traditions of ethnic communities
- Demographics
- Education in ethnic communities

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