



Grußrede von Prof. Dr. Emil Constantinescu

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HOMAGE
FOR A GREAT
HISTORICAL
PERSONALITY:

Árpád Göncz

The end of the 20th century brought on the world scene an event without precedent: the fall, from the inside, of a great empire with a terrible military force, through a peaceful revolt of masses.

It brought on the scene, at the same time, a new type of hero, which those masses, ready to fight and to die for their freedom, freely elected as their leader. This hero was neither a warrior, nor a fanatic agitator, but a visionary intellectual who believed in the force of his faiths and ideals. Árpád Göncz, was one of them.

World history shows us, also, that revolutions devour their heroes, or they compromise themselves in the exercise of power.

The undisputable prestige which they enjoy, after two decades, Árpád Göncz and the others in this family is explainable through a concept stated by Eschil two thousand years ago: *PATHEMATA MATHEMATA*, that is, "we learn through suffering".

Árpád Göncz, for whom in 1956 the prosecutors asked for a death penalty, being in the last moment commuted to life imprisonment, understood the pedagogy of suffering as a first step in the great lesson of the freedom for everyone in the limits of respecting the freedom for the others.

This fact made that the fall of a criminal regime was not followed by a chain of revenges to generate other abuses.

Through my presence here I wish to enlighten the great role played by Árpád Göncz had in a crucial event for the history of the South Eastern Europe and actually of the whole Europe: the Romanian – Hungarian reconciliation after centuries of confrontation.

In 1997 we decided to get together in Targu Mures, a big Romanian city where the population is half-Romanian and half Hungarian. Both Romanian and Hungarian flags were raised in the same place, both national anthems were played, both languages were spoken, in the same square, filled by the same people who violently confronted seven years before. At the end of this meeting, after Árpád Göncz shook hands of hundreds of people, he told me, visibly touched, that he could not realize which of them were Romanians and which of them were Hungarians.

The Hungarians in Romania had given twice, in elections, their unconditional trust to a Romanian of a different religion. The Romanians felt in 1997, that they can have an unconditional trust in Árpád Göncz as an advocate of the integration of Romania in NATO and EU. They know today that they were not wrong. After a decade, his daughter Kinga Göncz, as foreign Minister, took part at a very rare event, even inside EU: a common reunion of the Romanian and Hungarian governments, in Bucharest and Budapest.