
MIDAS Conference in Romania dedicated to the memory of Aron Ballo

(Monday, 14 May 2007) - by Judit Solymosi

Between 3-6 May, the European Association of Daily Newspapers in Minority and Regional Languages (MIDAS), in co-operation with the Hungarian language dailies Szabadsag and Bihari Naplo, from Kolozsvar (Cluj-Napoca, RO) and Nagyvarad (Oradea, RO) respectively, held an international conference entitled 'Daily newspapers in minority and regional languages and the issue of multilingualism in the EU' in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Besides politicians and media experts from Romania, the event was attended by leaders, editors-in-chief and representatives of minority and regional language daily newspapers from Slovakia, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Latvia, Ireland, Lithuania and Finland.

The main speaker of the conference was Otto von Habsburg, who spoke of the important role of minority newspapers in nuancing the picture presented in majority press. He also handed over the Otto von Habsburg Prize of Midas to Ms Margaretha Kopeinig, staff member of the Austrian daily newspaper Kurier for her continuous work for multilingualism and the protection of European minorities.

The event was dedicated to the memory of Aron Ballo, former editor-in-chief of Szabadsag, reporter for Eurolang, and friend, who died tragically at the age of 38 in a car crash in July 2006. The participants of the General Assembly of Midas supported the founding of the 'Aron Ballo Scholarship for Journalists'; the related final decision will be made by the Governing Board of MIDAS later.

The European Association of Daily Newspapers in Minority and Regional Languages (MIDAS) is a politically independent, non-profit umbrella organisation, based at the European Academy Bolzano (EURAC) and aiming at protecting and representing the interests of minority press. Its president is Toni Ebner, editor-in-chief of the German-language daily Dolomiten. The Association's 31 member newspapers are edited in 14 languages and publish more than 730,000 copies reaching millions of readers throughout Europe. (Eurolang 2007)