

# SPEECH

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

RULE OF LAW PROGRAM  
SOUTH EAST EUROPE

October 2015

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## „CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF BONN- COPENHAGEN DECLARATIONS“

BUCHAREST, 09.10.2015

**Your Excellencies, Herr Botschafter,  
Mr Presidential Advisor,  
Mr Secretary of State,  
Mrs Under Secretary of State,  
Mr President of the Schleswig-Holstein  
Landtag,  
Mr Consul General,  
Member of the Schleswig-Holstein  
Landtag,  
Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished guests,  
Dear friends!**

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our conference on behalf of the Rule of Law Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

We are very pleased that we can co-organize this event together with the Danish and German embassies and I would like to express my profound thanks to Ambassador Nielsen and to Ambassador Lauk and their teams for the excellent cooperation that we enjoyed when preparing this conference. Without your support, this event could not have been organized. I am also very grateful for the kind words that you found for our work.

We are honored by the presence of the Presidential Advisor Ștefan, Secretary of

State Ionita, and Under Secretary of State Cosmatu.

And of course I am delighted to welcome good friends from my home state, the state of Schleswig-Holstein, as well as two guests from our neighboring country, which is Denmark.

2015 marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations, which confirmed civil liberties for the national minorities on both sides of the German-Danish border.

The declaration of the German Federal Government was signed by then Chancellor Konrad Adenauer whose name our foundation bears and this would be reason enough for us to commemorate this event.

The other one is that the Rule of Law Program promotes values that cannot be separated from each other: Democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human and minority rights.

Romania, Denmark and Germany all have national minorities. Providing you with information on the situation of ethnic minorities in Denmark and Germany does of course not intend to convince our Romanian

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friends that they should replicate what we have done. Circumstances in our countries are different and one solution does not fit all. But sharing information and discussing different strategies is always beneficial for those who take part in it.

And from a legal point of view, Romania, Denmark and Germany have a lot in common. All three countries have committed themselves to protect their national minorities. 2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ratified also by Romania, Denmark and Germany. The same is true for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Of course, legal instruments are indispensable when you want to protect a minority. But legal instruments can only work well if people stand behind them and are convinced of their justness.

We in Germany have learnt a lot from the Scandinavian countries and especially from Denmark concerning how important it is for the success of a society to protect its ethnic, but also its social minorities. A minority-friendly society will always be more creative and not at risk of wasting or scaring away human resources. Many German companies have signed the Diversity Charter not only because they like the values that it promotes, but also because they think that the promotion of diversity is essential for the success of their business and will thus have a positive impact on the German society.

However, I do not wish to conceal that we still have problems in Germany. We do not only have a Danish minority in Germany and the ethnic group of the Frisians, but two

other officially acknowledged national minorities: The Sorbs and the Sinti and Roma. Hostilities against Sorbs fortunately do not happen every day, but they happen. And antiziganism is still too widespread in Germany. It was therefore an important political signal when the Schleswig-Holstein state legislature in 2012 amended the state's constitution and gave the minority of German Sinti and Roma the same rights and the same protection that the Danish minority and the ethnic group of Frisians enjoy. Finally I would like to thank each of you for participating in this event and for your interest in the topic it covers.

I now invite Mr Daniel Ionita, Secretary of State for Strategic Affairs to address the audience. He will be followed by Mrs Christiane Cosmatu, Under Secretary of State with the Department for Interethnic Affairs, but not without having mentioned that as a German I am very grateful for the fact that in Romania the German minority enjoys all the civil liberties that are guaranteed by the aforementioned conventions.