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# PRESENTATIONS

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*Maria Radziszewska*

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*Faculty of Social Sciences, Chair of Didactics and Education History  
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn*

## **Study visit of Polish education historians to Romania**

The scientific visit was held from 11 to 18 June 2017 at the invitation of the Union of Poles of Romania, whose president is Gerwazy Longher. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the Romanian primary and secondary education system as well as the system of higher education and come to know the educational, scientific and social activities of the Union of Poles of Romania.

The participants of the visit were scientists, lecturers and a post-graduate student from five Polish universities. The group included: dr Ewa Barnaś-Baran (Department of History and Theory of Education, Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Rzeszów), mgr Bohdan Głębocki (Department of Scientific Resources, Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts in Kalisz at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), prof. UAM. dr hab. Piotr Gołdyn (Department of Pedagogical Studies, Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts in Kalisz at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), dr Anna Haratyk (Department of History of Education, Institute of Pedagogical Studies at the University of Wrocław), dr Mirosław Piwowarczyk (deputy director of the Institute of Pedagogical Studies for Didactics and Quality of Teaching at the University of Wrocław), dr Maria Radziszewska (Department of Didactics and History of Education, Faculty of Social Science at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn) and mgr Karolina Sigda (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Faculty of Social Sciences).

The programme of the trip included study visits, meetings, discussions and consultations. They concerned the issues of the educational system in Romania, the organisation of the school year and the academic year, the recognition of education quality system, the promotion and development of the academic staff, the possibility of archival and library queries abroad, the education of the Polish minority in Romania and the situation of Poles in Romania.

The programme included visits to:

- The Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iasi and the University Museum
- The Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava

- The Henryk Sienkiewicz Primary School in Solonetu Nou
- The Seat of the Union of Poles of Romania in Suceava and the seats of the Polish Homes in Bukovina.

### **Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iasi**

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iasi (UAIC) was formed on 26 October 1860. At the beginning, its academic activity was limited to three first faculties of law, philosophy and theology. At present, there are 14 faculties within its structure. The Faculty of Philology at UAIC in Iasi offers a Polish language class.

The origins of the university date back to the founding of the Latin school in Cotnari, near Iasi, by hospodar Ioan Iacob Heraclid after his travels around Poland. The school (Colegiile de la Cotnari) operated just for one year (1562–1563) and was restored only by Peter V the Lame. The next step on the way to the university was the school of Three Hierarchs (Trei Ierarhi) established by the hospodar Vasile Lupu on 9 May 1640. At the same time, the first library was also created at the school. Its collection included Latin, Greek, Old Church Slavonic, Italian and Polish books. Classes at the Trei Ierarhi school were held in Greek and for this reason it was called a Greek school. The tumultuous times of the Moldovan-Polish and Russian-Turkish wars impacted the operation of the Greek school. The Greek school was re-opened by the Moldovan ruler Nicholas Mavrocordat under the name of the Royal Academy in 1714. The academy operated in the period of 1714–1821. Then, it was closed down together with the academy in Bucharest. Another re-opening and reorganisation of the school were conducted by another ruler Mihail Sturdza on 16 June 1835, who gave the school the name of Mihailean Academy. One should emphasise the contribution made by Gheorghe Asachi (1788–1869) into the establishment of the Academy and the development of national education in Moldova. Asachi, who had received his education e.g. at the Josephine University in Lviv, started lectures on engineering in the Romanian language at the Mihailean Academy in 1829. (Thanks to him, the first institute for the education of girls was established (1834) and he also founded vocational schools (1841) and laid the foundations for higher technical education (1813, engineering school)). As ordered by the ruler Grigore Ghica, lectures in the period 1847–1851 were given in French. At Mihailean Academy, there were three faculties: philosophy, law and theology, which then entered the structure of the University of Iasi funded by Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza. The university was founded one year after the reunification of two Romanian kingdoms.

The first visit in our programme was meetings with academic staff of the University of Iasi. The Polish group was received very warmly by **prof. univ. dr Laurențiu Rădvan** **Directorul Departamentului de Istorie** and **asist. univ. dr Bogdan Ceobanu**. Prof. **Laurențiu Rădvan** talked about the history of Iasi and the Polish themes in the city history. Then, the scientists from Romania and Poland started a discussion on the higher education. They talked about various issues, such as promotion and scientific development of personnel, education of students and education quality system. Thanks to the teacher of

Romanian language, Elena Larco, interpreter and guide in one person, we had the opportunity to visit the university museum (Muzeul Universităţii “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iaşi). The museum has two permanent exhibitions. The first one is devoted to Cucuten civilisation and the other one is an academic exhibition. We were shown around the museum exhibitions by dr Marian Hariuc.

During a walk around Iasi, we stopped in front of the building of the oldest school in the city, where Scole Gheorche Asachi is located.

### **Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava**

Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava (USV) was founded on 7 May 1990. The beginning of university education in Suceava dates back to the opening of the Institute of Pedagogical Studies on 1 October 1963. Its first rector was a writer, critic and historian of literature prof. univ. dr Constantin Ciopraga. Since 1975, the Institute has slowly moved towards technical education in accordance with the political system. Currently, the USV includes 10 faculties.

During our second visit, we were shown around the university campus by prof. dr Olympia Mitric and Simony Sărohe. We saw, for example, lecture and lab rooms, the reading room, the library, the library storage room, a sports facility with a swimming pool, a conference centre and staff welfare rooms.

We also met the Director of the Department of Educational Sciences prof. univ conf. Otylia Clipă. The department operates within the structure of the Faculty of Educational Sciences. It is responsible for the education of basic primary and kindergarten teachers. Students undergo training in enterprises and schools in the city and province of Suceava as well as abroad within the framework of the Erasmus programme. The department cooperates with many foreign centres, including Polish universities, such as the universities in Białystok and Kielce.

### **Henryk Sienkiewicz Primary School in Solonetu Nou**

The beginnings of the education system in Solonetu Nou date back to the 1850s. At that time, the first teacher appeared in the village and started to teach in a two-class system. A school building was built in 1865. The current school building was built in the place of the former school and put into service in 1995. It plays the role of the largest educational institution in the Romanian Bukovina, where Polish language classes are still being taught. From 2002, the school in Solonetu Nou and other Polish schools were included in the Children of Bukovina educational and support programme. The main goal of the programme is to broaden the access to education among children of Polish community and improve the system of their education.

In the school year 2016/2017, the school in Solonetu Nou was attended by 82 students from grades 0–8. In turn, the kindergarten took care of 32 children. Pre-school class-

es are held from 8–12 AM while the school is open three hours longer. The education of Polish children and youth in Solonetu Nou takes place in Polish sections in a national school where the Polish language is taught as part of extracurricular activities. Grade 0, grades 1–4 and grades 5–8 (middle school level) have 3, 4 and 3 hours of Polish language classes per week, respectively. In addition, 6-year-old children have 2 hours of the Polish language classes per week, too. The teacher of the Polish language is Maria Ostrowschi Chahula. The participation in the Polish language classes is possible at parents' request. The course is launched for 10 people. In Romanian schools, it is also possible to teach religion and music and rhythmic skills in Polish. Thanks to the subject of history and traditions of national minorities, it is easier for Polish community middle-school students (grades 5–8) to learn about their own language and culture. However, there are too few textbooks to run this class. In the Solonetu Nou school, students do not complete the compulsory school duty, which lasts until they are 16 or until they finish the 9th grade. So, after finishing the 8th grade, they take a competence exam in mathematics and Romanian language. A positive result of the exam enables them to continue education, e.g. at Gura Humorului Secondary School, which offers the Polish language class.

During our visit to the Henryk Sienkiewicz Primary School in Solonetu Nou, we met pre-school teacher Iuliana Ciorneli and teacher of Polish language Maria Ostrowschi Chahula. We listened to a Polish-Romanian artistic performance given by pre-school children.

### **Union of Poles of Romania**

The Union of Poles of Romania has existed since 1990. It was registered on 16 March 1990 as the Union of Poles of Romania “Polish Home” in Bucharest. Initially, the Polish community organisation was active in Bucharest, where the bilingual magazine *Polonus* was started to be published in 1991. After the 2nd Congress of the Union of Poles of Romania, which took place on 13–14 April 1991, the seat of the organisation was moved to Suceava. Then, the Union became a federation organisation affiliated with local Polish community organisations – Associations of Poles. In 2015, there were 14 Association of Poles in the following locations: Bucharest, Gura Humorului, Iasi, Cacica, Constanta, Moara, Solonetu Nou, Paltinoasa, Plesa, Pojana Mikuli, Radauti, Ruda, Siret and Suceava. Most of the locations are situated in Bukovina but Poles inhabit also other regions throughout Romania. They are one of 20 minority groups in Romania and the Union of Poles of Romania is one of 19 organisations acknowledged by the Romanian government. Poles also have their MP in the Romanian Parliament. The first one was Antoni Linzmaier, then Jan Piotr Barbasz, Gerwazy Longher, and now Victoria Longher is serving her first MP term.

The structure of the Union of Poles of Romania is made up of five-member Management Board and presidents of 14 local branches from all over the country. From the very beginning of the Union, its presidents were Xenia Grabska-Stoica, Antoni Rojowski and Jan Piotr Babiasz. Gerwazy Longher has been performing the role of the president of the Polish community organisation since 2002.

During our visit to the seat of the Union of Poles of Romania, we met Elżbieta Wieruszewska-Calistru, who provided us with the information on the activities of this Polish community organisation. She discussed the forms of educational and cultural activity which are aimed at preservation of the identity of Poles in Romania. The biggest undertaking in this area is the Polish Days, which have been organised since 1998 and combine the scientific symposium with a series of cultural events. Since 2002, they have taken place under the slogan “Closer to one another” to strengthen the efforts for mutual Polish-Romanian awareness and collaboration. Publishing activity is a permanent occupation of the Union of Poles of Romania (*Polonus*, *Little Polonus*, monographs from symposia, monographs of villages and parishes, etc.). A discussion on the situation of Polish community education in Romania was held. Our speaker talked about the possibilities of education of Polish children in the region of Suceava, where there is the largest concentration of the population of Polish origin in Romania. Thanks to the kindness of the staff of the Union of Poles of Romania, we had the opportunity to get acquainted with the library collection and we also received several publications as a gift. On our part, we gave some books for Polish children in Romania, as well.

The life of Polish community in Romania revolves around Polish Homes, which are managed by the Union of Poles of Romania. In Suceava, the Polish Home at Ioana Vodă Viteazu nr 5, built in the period of 1903–1907 by the members of the Brotherly Help and Polish Reader Association (Towarzystwo Bratniej Pomocy i Czytelni Polskiej), serves also as the seat of the Union of Poles of Romania. Meetings of local Associations of Poles are also held in the Polish Homes in Bucharest, Iasi, Cacica, Solonetu Nou, Plesa, Pojana Mikuli, Paltinoasa, Radauti, Ruda and Siret. The Polish Home in Moara, which is now under construction, will soon be put into service. Polish Homes are not only meeting places but also places of joint activities of the local community. Polish language classes are held there, as well.

Apart from Polish language courses run by the Polish Homes or a school consultation point in Bucharest, it is possible to study Polish at the Universities of Iasi, in Craiova, Cluj and Bucharest. In addition, Polish language teachers of the above-mentioned universities often sit on the jury of the Polish National Language Contest, which has been organised since 2013. This phase makes it possible to take part in the Polish Literature and Language Contest in Warsaw. Middle and secondary school students from the Suceava province take part and enjoy successes in this contest every year. On 10–11 March 2017, Anna Musiał of the University of Cluj and Dariusz Kasprzyk of the University of Iasi became members of the examination committee of the national competition as foreign language teachers.

### **Polish Home in Plesa**

Plesa is a Polish village founded 181 years ago by Czadetsk highlanders. It is currently inhabited by approx. 70 families. Its inhabitants live in difficult conditions and often go to work abroad. The village is located on the mountain of Ples (734 m), on the top of which there is St Anna Church, built in 1904 in the Romanesque style. Next to the church,

there is a new cemetery and a parish house, since Plesa was established as a separate parish on 1 September 2013. Its first parish priest, father Andrzej Staszkwian, was a theology student at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. 1906 saw the construction of a school building, where Polish teacher Józef Lechowicz organised classes in four grades. In the same year, the People's Libraries Society Reading Room began its operation in the school building. There were a school and kindergarten in Plesa before 2010 but now children and youth currently go to schools in the municipality of Monăstirea Humorului. At the primary level, it is the Krystyna Bochenek Primary School and Kindergarten No. 2 in Pojana Mikuli. In contrast, classes at grades 9–12 are conducted, among others, by Colegiul "Alexandru cel Bun" in Gura Humorului, where Anetta Buzuk, a Polish language teacher, sent for didactic work by the Centre for Development of Polish Education Abroad. In the place of the former school, thanks to the efforts of the Union of Poles of Romania, a new building of the Polish Home in Plesa was put into service in 2014 and has been supervised by Edvig Alexandrovici. The Polish Home became the seat of the local Association of Poles, which has been in existence in Plesa since 1991. On 24 July 2016 on the occasion of Plesa's 180th anniversary, a solemn celebration was organised. It was attended by a delegation of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, represented by the senators Artur Warzocha and Jan Maria Jackowski, the representatives of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Bucharest, the authorities of the Union of Poles of Romania and the clergy led by Petru Gherghel, the bishop of the diocese of Iasi.

While in Plesa, we met the inhabitants and attended a Corpus Christi service, walked around the village, the old cemetery with the St John Paul II cross and chapel. We also admired the enormous reliefs engraved in sandstone by the local sculptor and poet Bolek Majerik.

The academic visit to Romania occurred at the end of the school year and the university examination session. We witnessed the graduation ceremony at the lower-level primary school, which took place on the stage at the Museum of the Bukovina Village in Suceava. In addition to school and university life, we had the opportunity to see the everyday life of Romanians and Polish minorities on the trail that led through Satmar, Maramures, Bukovina and Moldavia. When visiting Polish villages, we noticed the affection for Polishness that their inhabitants had and their cultivation of the traditions, culture and language of our common ancestors.

The last unscheduled point of our scientific journey related to the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Reformation was the visit to the Reformation College in Sárospatak, Hungary, where Jan Amos Comenius, "the teacher of Europe", worked and created his works in the period of 1650–1654. We have also found reformist themes in the north of Hungary at the city of Nyíregyháza, located more than 40 km from Sárospatak.

In the summary discussion, the participants expressed their hope that the academic visit had fulfilled its role of an international exchange of views, experiences and perspectives oriented at joint research.