



together  
for  
others

împreună  
pentru  
alții



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**THE FRIENDSHIP FOUNDATION (UK – ROMANIA)**

WITH FUNDAȚIA PRO PRIETENIA ARAD

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**MAY 2010**



On 4 May Brian Gregory of The Friendship Foundation (UK – Romania), and Puiu Tarcea of Pro Prietenia Arad, attended the Romanian Parliament in Bucharest where Brian delivered a speech, on behalf of both our charities, at the inauguration of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Human Dignity and the Signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Dignity

**Registered UK Charity no. 1130205**

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN CHARITIES IN THE MATTER OF HUMAN DIGNITY



Brian at the Romanian Parliament

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for your invitation to speak. I do so as the vice-president of Fundația Pro Prietenia Arad and chairman of the small British charity, The Friendship Foundation (UK – Romania), which has supported it for ten years.

I am also a minister in the Church of England and, as such, I embrace the Universal Declaration on Human Dignity with an understanding that comes from my Anglican perspective; that is to say, an understanding derived primarily from Scripture, but informed by reason and tradition. I particularly support Deputy Andon's remarks concerning ecumenism.

Made in the image and likeness of God, all persons are sacred. People do not lose this status because of gender, disability, poverty, age, misadventure or misfortune. Rather, as we have heard, through internal and external mechanisms, the image of God in individuals, and collectively in society, is marred. Its restoration is a work of faith, consummated as a matter of human rights and also as a matter of love.

It would seem that the legislative body and the charitable body both have work to do. There is a need for both to work together. At best, the administration of human rights, and the corresponding expression of love, would be a unified whole in the delivery of social justice. In reality, society invariably has to call upon the time, personnel, resources, motivation and passion of the charity to fulfil its aspirations to human dignity.

It is clear that the context, experience and working methods of charities in similar fields but different countries are likely to be different, even where they aspire to a common human dignity. Hence, there will always be benefits to be had by charities from different countries cooperating with each other.



Puiu at the Romanian Parliament

Within the partnership of The Friendship Foundation in the UK and Pro Prietenia in Romania, three-years ago we started an exchange programme for youth from our two countries. In its second year the project received funding from the EU. Now, in its third year, we are seeking funding for a much-enlarged exchange to also include the Republic of Moldova, Poland and

the Netherlands. Exchange programmes always bring some benefit, but our particular programme benefits young people who are damaged by disadvantage and goes some way to restoring their human dignity.

In a different sphere, our charities are working together to benefit victims of crime here in Romania. We help make them aware of their human rights in law, but we go further, and through counselling and acts of kindness, restore their human dignity. To this end, we are beginning to cooperate with the Victim Support charity in Britain with its 35 years experience in the field. (Incidentally, currently 75% of the UK Victim Support charity's annual income of £49m comes from the Ministry of Justice).

As a final example, one of the gravest affronts to human dignity in modern times has to be that of human trafficking. The dangers inherent in the crime clearly demand much sensitivity and confidentiality, and its detection and prevention has to be the work of the appropriate authorities. However, there is an important role to be played by charities: in providing a neutrality - which is important for those who have cause to fear the authorities - in providing sanctuary, in providing possible repatriation and, importantly, the means of restoring human dignity to broken lives. In this, charities do well to work together, possibly in some form of recognisable international network.

In conclusion, surely there can be no more dignified a charter around which western charities may rally, and no more honourable a declaration by which their activities may be inspired and nourished, than the Universal Declaration of Human Dignity? May God bless it to our use and us to his service. *(BG)The Palace of Parliament, Bucharest, 4 May 2010*