A Victory for All – Supreme Court's decision on the Gyöngyöspata case

Roma Education Fund (REF) welcomes the decision of the Hungarian Supreme Court (Kuria) regarding the case of segregation of Romani children in education in Gyöngyöspata. The Supreme Court rejected the request for reviewing the latest verdict and uphold the legally binding decision of the Debrecen Court of Appeal.

As of the Supreme Court's decision, the previously awarded 99-million-forint compensation must be paid to the 60 Roma individuals who were illegally separated from their peers in the local primary school and provided with lower level of education.

The Kuria justified its decision by stating *"in case of compensation for non-pecuniary damages, the only way to assess the compensation is monetary compensation, there is no legal possibility to apply compensation in kind"*.

The decision and its justification prove that the Hungarian government's efforts in denying to pay the compensation to the plaintiffs is without legal basis also goes against basic human rights and principles of democracy. Additionally, the court decision proved to strengthen the independency of judiciary and the hope that democratic principles are alive and equal before the law.

REF calls the Hungarian government and local authorities to avoid using the Supreme Court's decision to further scapegoat and stigmatize Roma in any manner deepening the tension between Roma and non-Roma communities. Instead, the Kuria's ruling needs to be handled in the light of human rights and specifically address the needs of both communities avoiding the reproduction of ethnic-based systematic educational segregation. REF also urges the immediate implementation of the decision in order for the rule of law to be upheld.

Ensuring equal access to quality education is in the interest and responsibility of the state and the interest of both Roma and non-Roma communities leading to social and economic integration.

This is a victory for all, a victory of truth and a victory for democracy!