

## Laudation

on the occasion of bestowing the  
JUSTITIA REGNORUM FUNDAMENTUM AWARD  
on

Dr GÁBOR HAVAS,

Sociologist, retired Senior Researcher of the Institute for Sociology of the  
Hungarian Academy of Sciences



We congratulate sociologist **Dr Gábor Havas** as one of this year's laureates of the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum Award. He has received this award as an acknowledgement of his outstanding professional activities of several decades aimed at relentlessly helping to improve the situation of those in need, especially the Roma, and assisting the efforts of those who want to make a substantial contribution to the implementation of equal opportunities.

Gábor Havas graduated from the Faculty of Humanities of ELTE University, majoring in Hungarian and adult education. Between 1967 and 1970 he worked as an adult education official in Pécs, then as a teacher in the secondary grammar school of the Slovakian minority. From 1971 he participated in the sociological studies led by István Kemény and, from 1972, he conducted independent studies together with Ottilia Solt. Between 1973 and 1990, as a researcher at the Institute of Adult Education, he studied the following topics: family level socialisation in various social strata, working culture and lifestyles, the society of the perishing small settlements, the poor of the villages, the typology of Roma communities, the lifestyles of various Roma groups, the amateur theatrical movement.

Between 1979 and 1981, under the auspices of the Institute of Adult Education, he was given the opportunity to conduct a comparative study of the Roma, trying to uncover the differences between various subgroups of the Roma community – the Romungro, the Boyash and the Lovari. In the course of his research, he also examined the employment seeking and changing strategies of the Roma.

He participated in the project “*Roma Workers in the Construction Industry*” and in the movie programme “*Changes in Rural Life*” of the 1980s. As a part of the latter, two movies were made on the basis of his research in Ibafa: “*Rest in Peace*” and “*Cowboys*”.

Beside his research activities, he also participated in the efforts of organisations and family support institutions supporting or dealing with the Roma. As an active member of the Democratic Opposition, he edited and distributed the monthly *Beszélő*, along with other *samizdat* publications.

Between 1989 and 1994 in Csenyété, a small settlement in Northern Borsod, together with other sociologists, he made an attempt at changing the unchangeable: to move the shrunken community out of despair.

Between 1990 and 1994 he was a representative of the Alliance of Free Democrats in the Parliament, member of its Committee on Social Welfare, Health Care and the Protection of Families. He spoke against segregation and placing Roma children in auxiliary schools on several occasions. During this period he also strived to have some results in the Csenyété project.

In 1994 he taught at the University of Economics and, in the same year, together with István Kemény and Gábor Kertesi, he launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> Roma Inquiries, in the course of which they discovered that, although the number of primary school graduates had increased among the Roma, there had been no significant progress in secondary and higher education and the employment rates had drastically fallen.

Between 1995 and 2006 he worked as researcher, then senior researcher at the Institute for Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He earned his candidate's degree in sociology with his thesis "*Changes in the Livelihood of Various Roma Groups in Hungary and Their Relation to the Majority Society*" in 1996.

After 1999 he focused on studying anti-Roma sentiments in schools and the process of ghettoization. Together with his wife, Ilona Liskó, and István Kemény he conducted several school related studies, the first of them in 1999-2000. They found the strongest anti-Roma sentiments in settlements where ghettoization was under way both in the schools and the settlement itself. In the course of their second study in 2003-2004 they found some schools denying having Roma students. In the course of their project "*Impact Assessment of the Integrationalist Education Policy*", a significant part of schools were unable to take a stance on Roma issues.

Between 2000 and 2008 he was the Academic Director of the Romaversitas Foundation.

He has published the results of his sociological research in Roma communities in several books both individually and as co-author.

With the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum Award, we would like to express our appreciation for and pay tribute to the decades-long, outstanding work of Gábor Havas in the field of sociology and his relentless and highly professional activities in the interests of the Roma and those excluded and in need.

Budapest, 28 June 2013.