

ALLIANCE ALIVE

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE OF HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA

2012

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European Values,
Transylvanian Features

"For 22 years our main pursuit has been to preserve the identity of the Hungarian community."

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Ethnic Minority
Promoting European Diversity

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National Identities
in a Unified Europe

"The European Union's most important feature remains that we are all, even the greatest nations, minorities within a common Europe."

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Our Aim: a **Strong Hungarian Community** in Transylvania



European Values, Transylvanian Features

Ever since its establishment after the fall of the communist régime in Romania, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) has in a dedicated and consistent manner supported the Euro-Atlantic integration of this country. As soon as the beginning of the nineties, the political formation belonged to the European family of center-right political entities. The RMDSZ represents the interests of one and a half million Hungarians in Romania. For 22 years our main pursuit has been to preserve the identity of this community while we were all along adepts of the principles of a democratic state of law and of an open-minded and welcoming society within the European Union. These are inseparable concepts and this is why the focus in the new program of the European People's Party (EPP) on historical minorities is of enormous importance to us. These ethnic groups are organic parts of equal rights of the state and society they live in, the state and society they in so many ways enrich. For this to come true the protection and exercise of the cultural, linguistic and religious self-identity of historical ethnic minorities are needed.

There are several European models to guide the Hungarian community in Romania to establish a wide circle of linguistic, individual and collective rights and to preserve the special features of historical ethnic minorities.

The RMDSZ determines its active policies along these lines.

Our publication presents the 22 years' history of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), its outstanding programs, its consistent policy while it also offers an insight into the everyday life, customs and wonderful traditions of the Hungarians in Transylvania.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Kelemen Hunor'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

KELEMEN HUNOR,
president of the RMDSZ

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Community **Alive**

Hungarians living in Romania form one of the largest national minorities in Europe. The provisional data of the 2011 census reveal that 1,237,746 citizens (6.5 percent of the total population of Romania) consider themselves Hungarians.

Hungarians represent approximately 20 percent of the total population of Transylvania; in Szeklerland (Harghita and Covasna Counties) they form the majority.

The overwhelming majority (99 percent) of the Hungarian population of Romania lives in Transylvanian counties (Arad, Bistrița-Năsăud, Bihor, Brașov, Alba,

Harghita, Hunedoara, Cluj, Covasna, Caraș-Severin, Maramureș, Mureș, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Sălaj, Timiș). During the last census 18.9 percent of the total population of this region declared themselves Hungarian. In Mureș County the proportion of the Hungarian population is 37.8 percent. Hungarians form a majority of 84.8 percent in Harghita County, while in Covasna County they represent 73.6 percent of the population.

Census data from 2002 reveal that 46.6 percent of the Hungarians in Romania belong to the Hungarian Reformed Church, 41 percent to the Roman Catholic Church, and 4.5 percent to the Unitarian Church.





On December the 25th 1989, on the aftermath of the fall of the Communist regime, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) came into being with the purpose of representing the interests and community of Hungarians living in Romania. Organized according to the rules of inner pluralism, the members of RMDSZ belong to county/regional organizations, to ideologically conceived platforms and to associated organizations. The associated organizations of the Alliance are social, scientific, cultural or professional groups and youth organizations.

22 Years – a Single Alliance: **RMDSZ**

MAIN PRINCIPLES

Autonomous Transylvanian Politics

The Alliance has undertaken the task of representing the interests of the Romanian Hungarian community in Romanian and European politics as well. Ever since its establishment, the formation supported the necessity of a united and self-consistent Hungarian political life. This is based on the principle that living as a minority, the Transylvanian Hungarian community should politically be represented by a single, united organization that would offer a framework for varied ideologies and not by various political parties. While pursuing its objectives, the RMDSZ seeks to establish equal to equal relations with Romanian and European political actors expecting these not to formulate its goals but to help the formation achieve its own objectives. The RMDSZ is convinced the Hungarians community in Romania is the only entity entitled to make decisions concerning the Hungarian community in Romania.

Historical Step: an Ethnical Political Organization Joining the Government

Following the parliamentary elections in 1996, the RMDSZ faced a historical chance: it was possible to implement the objectives formulated in its program regarding both the general democratic development of Romanian society and the solving of minority-related issues as member of the governing coalition. The political forces constituting the governing coalition - the Christian Democrat Peasant Party (PNTCD), the National Liberal Part (PNL), the Romanian Party for Social Democracy (PDSR), the Democratic Party (PD) and the RMDSZ - signed a governing and parliamentary agreement. The Agreement declares that for the political support of the new government and for the development of a new model for the cohabitation of ethnic groups the presence of the RMDSZ in the governing coalition is required.

Owing to its results achieved in the 1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012 elections and to its activity within local governments, the parliament and government structures, the RMDSZ is a significant, unavoidable element of Romanian political life.

Tight Cooperation with Hungarian democratic political formations

It is for the benefit of the representative organization of the Hungarian community in Romania to cooperate well with the Hungarian Government and with democratic political formations in Hungary. Concerning Hungarian-Hungarian relations, the RMDSZ considers that the support of the Hungarian Government is vital to Hungarian spiritual and cultural life outside Hungarian borders. Hungarians outside Hungary need to rely on a strong and clear Hungarian political life and on a Hungarian Government that would maintain constant and trustworthy relations of cooperation with Hungarian organizations outside Hungary. Interstate and intergovernmental relations also need to be good as they contribute to the realization of the aims of these organizations. The RMDSZ wishes to support the strategic partnership between Romania and Hungary as it is convinced the two states need to cooperate so as to define the life of the entire geographic area.

Strong presence in Europe

From the very first moment the RMDSZ has represented the Christian Democrat value system. In September 1993 the organization became a permanent member of the European Democrat Union (EDU) and in October 1999 became a full member of the European People's Party being the first among Hungarian organizations and Romanian parties in the Carpathian Basin to acquire that status. Despite all these, the RMDSZ is built on the principle of political pluralism manifested through the functioning of platforms organized within the Alliance on ideological bases.



The RMDSZ is also a member of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEV-FUEN), and of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO).

Our Activity: a Positive Influence on Hungarian Politics in the Carpathian Basin

During the last 22 years, the RMDSZ focused on cooperation and dialogue with the majority. Participating in the governing coalition is important as the Alliance can greatly contribute through governmental means to the improvement of the life of the Hungarian community in Romania. The presence and role in the Romanian Government of the RMDSZ protects the status and future of ethnic minorities in Romania and safeguards their evolution. The presence of the RMDSZ in the Romanian Government is not limited to benefits in the field of Romanian politics: the fact bears an important message for states in the Carpathian Basin where ethnical issues have lately appeared to be increasingly problematic.

STRUCTURE

Presidents

From 1989 to 1993 the first president of RMDSZ was Géza Domoikos. Béla Markó was president of the Alliance from 1993 to 2011. His successor, Hunor Kelemen became president of the RMDSZ elected by the Congress in 2011.

Decisive bodies

The Alliance functions according to the principle of organizational self-government, distinguishing between legislative, executive and controlling bodies.

The Congress is the utmost decisive body of the Alliance. The decisive bodies of the Alliance in between two Congresses are: the Council of Representatives of the Alliance (SZKT-CRA), the Permanent Council of the Alliance (SZÁT-PCA), and the Alliance Presidency (AP).

The General Secretariat is the executive body of the Alliance. It implements the decrees passed by the Congress, the CRA, the PCA and the AP. Accordingly, the GS it reaches decisions within its own competence.

The consulting bodies of the Alliance are: the Consulting Council of Regional Presidents (TEKT-CCRP), the Consulting Council of Platforms (PKT-CCP) and the National Council of Self-Governments (OÖT-NCS). The bodies credited with controlling are the Regulation Control Commission of the Alliance, the Ethical and Disciplinary Commission of the Alliance and the Alliance Control Commission.

Curiosities in the History of the RMDSZ

Did you know that..... ?

- the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania is a movement established during the change in the political regime in order to represent every aspect of the Hungarian community in Transylvania
- the various aspects of the Hungarian community in Transylvania are represented by various platforms in the Alliance (Transylvanian Hungarian Initiative, Platform for the Equality of Chances Across Borders, Christian Democratic Platform, National Liberal Circle, Women for Women, Romanian Hungarian Entrepreneurs' Platform, Liberal Circle, Social Democratic Platform)
- the first official document of the Alliance, its Declaration formulated on December the 25th 1989 states: "The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania is based on the autonomy rights of Hungarians in Romania"
- in the first democratic parliamentary elections organized in Romania on May the 20th 1990 the RMDSZ gathered 991 601 votes (7,23%) for the House of Commons and 1 004 353 votes (7,20) for Senate, by which the RMDSZ ranked then as the second political force in Romania
- the RMDSZ is the steadiest and the most consistent political actor in Romania: since the first elections it has been the only Romanian political force with continuous representation in the parliament without ever having changed its name or ideology: the Alliance has continuously upgraded its political program according to the democratic development and the European integration of the country
- the Alliance has adopted a political program urging for European integration already at its second congress (Brasov, 1993) and it has represented it both in the Romanian parliament and in European fora
- in Hungarian-Hungarian relations the Alliance stands for the principle of equal vicinity with Hungarian democratic parties and for efficient cooperation with the Hungarian government based on the above principles
- in the opinion of the Alliance Hungarian-Hungarian relations should always according to the international practice and tradition enforce the political representation of the Hungarian community in Romania instead of weakening it
- for an increasingly efficient representation of Hungarian interests the RMDSZ supports the continuous improvement of Romanian-Hungarian relations consolidating by this the stability of the region, the development of economic relations, the European integration of the two states through cooperation on the level of the two governments, local governments and NGOs
- the Alliance cooperated in the organizing of the first joint meeting of the Romanian and Hungarian government in October 2005
- historical churches in Romania are gaining their confiscated property back (over 1100 buildings, so far) on the basis of the principle *restitutio in integrum* sustained by the Alliance





Interview with **Hunor Kelemen**, President of the RMDSZ

A New Chapter

In Alliance with the Hungarian Community in Romania

Hunor Kelemen has been president of the RMDSZ since February the 26th 2011. He is pursuing the objectives established in his political program entitled "Alliance for Hungarians". Hunor Kelemen has been a member of the Alliance for the last 16 years. He entered politics as state secretary for culture and continued as an MP and later as executive president. As executive president of the RMDSZ he gained insight into the work of local organizations and participated in elaborating the inner structure and program of the Alliance. Since 2011 as president of the formation he has been working for the widening of the circle of rights exercised by the Hungarian community in Romania, for the improvement of their living standards and for the Romanian society to accept and respect in the spirit of the European system of values the rights of this historical ethnic minority of one and a half million souls.

Mr. President, you have been an active public figure for a long time. Why did you wish to become president of the RMDSZ?

I chose to enter public life already as a student. Not necessarily politics but public life anyway. I founded a newspaper, edited it, I wrote, I organized a team and did my best to build our community. Whenever a task came along I was happy to fulfill it but I myself have been on the lookout for new challenges all the time. I was summoned in January 1997 and I accepted to enter politics. I have been working for the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) ever since thus I had 15 years at my disposal to get to know our Alliance. And I do know its ups and downs as I know the problems Hungarians are facing here, the issues troubling various communities. I have acquired an amount of experience and knowledge that entitles me to say I am able to undertake the

office of president to the RMDSZ. I have a clear image of Hungarians in Transylvania, in Romania. I can imagine how this community should continue its journey and I also know the time for changes has arrived.

Our aim is to secure a future for Hungarians in Transylvania

What have you done as president of the RMDSZ to reinforce the trust invested by electors in the Alliance?

The RMDSZ has got one perennial ally: the community of Hungarians in Romania. The RMDSZ belongs to Hungarian people in Romania and not to politicians. We needed to reinforce the faith in us of those who have worked for the benefit of the Hungarian community. I hope we can restore the trust of those who have lately avoided public life. A strong,

consistent and authentic RMDSZ is for the best interest of all Hungarians. As I see it, true dialogue requires us to listen to people's problems and opinions and to sincerely explain the arguments behind our decisions. Change depends not only on the new president and his team. It is a joint task and responsibility: we need to transform the Alliance together. If we wish to bring the RMDSZ closer to people, then our politicians need to learn to keep continuous contact with their electors and to be visible to them. Last March we have initiated a wide program under the title Transylvanian Consultation. Within it, through our local organizations and with the help of volunteers we are asking the members of our community: what are the priorities of the Hungarians in Romania, what are the tasks they would assign to the organization representing their interests. We have designed our program according to the answers received and this is the program we are using

in the election campaign this autumn as represents the will of the Hungarian community.

For more than two years together with the Democratic Liberal Party (PD-L) the RMDSZ was part of the Romanian government and you were head of the Ministry of Culture. What were the results for the RMDSZ?

The law on education became effective in 2011. Its implementation was in several cases and it still is a challenge to us. Despite all its flaws and related difficulties, the implementation of the law on education was an important and valuable step. Another important result of our participation in government was that with the required sacrifices though but still we have managed to keep the budget in balance and Romania has avoided the trap so many EU member states have not. These countries have to make now the difficult decisions we made in 2010-2011. This is not to imply we were cleverer but more disciplined yes, we were. We realized the problem was of a magnitude that would not allow for popular delays, indiscipline and lack of responsibility. People have come to accept this especially as they see what happens in Europe today. They understand now that the austerity measures were taken not out of a taste of the government for torturing tax-paying citizens. The activity of the Ministry of Culture is also a valuable result of our being part of the governing coalition. We could continue and support programs such as the restoration of historical monuments or the support of various reviews. We have advanced in the domain of the preservation of our cultural and spiritual heritage by recommending the Roman Catholic pilgrimage at Sumuleu Ciuc for the UNESCO World Heritage List. I can only say the last two and a half years were benefic for the RMDSZ.

The politicians of the RMDSZ are concerned with economic issues. During the summer you have presented with MEP Iuliu Winkler the Transylvania 2020 economic program. What is this strategy based on?

The Transylvania 2020 program is our own preparing and our preparation of the community for the 2014-2020 financial framework of the EU. Following a series of thorough consultations we are by the end of this year elaborating the strategy and action plan we intend to incorporate into the Romania 2020 Plan our country is expected to present in Brussels at the beginning of 2013. The Transylvania 2020 program focuses on cohesion and integration, on economic development and employment. We do not want Transylvania and the communities of Hungarians in Romania to be left out of these processes. This is why we started to elaborate this strategy and plan and to formulate very clear, palpable objectives. Our plans



and the programs Romania will initiate from 2014 onwards matter a great deal. They might determine the nature of EU funds this country is going to be able to explore and our own position as Transylvanian Hungarians, local governments and communities within the entire framework. These are not dreams based on unnamable sources - we are talking about definite plans and established funds. Our aim is to secure a future for Hungarians in Transylvania so that they be able to plan and construct their life on their native land, to have a job and a decent income there and to feel they are leading a secure life in Romania.

What are the objectives of the RMDSZ for the following period?

We are obviously preparing for the autumn election campaign - this is the greatest challenge of the moment. A series of important issues will emerge next year and the RMDSZ is keen on making its voice heard and presenting its point of view concerning those issues. Such an issue is the restitution of private and church property confiscated during the time of the communist régime. In 2013 Romania will have to account for this matter before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and will have to settle such matters through a clear and definite law regulating the field. It is a vital necessity for the Hungarian community in Romania that the RMDSZ be present, representing its firm standpoint in the matter by the time it is discussed. The other topic of utmost importance is the amendment of the Romanian constitution. We have recommendations for the amendment of each and every paragraph in the constitution. A significant issue is the status of Hungarian as a regional official language, as it de facto already is the language of use in the Szekler region. The administrative territorial reorganization of the country is again discussed and we need to represent the interests of the Hungarian community in this respect as well. We are facing a period rich in challenges and the Alliance is prepared to engage.

Ethnic minority promoting European diversity

LÁSZLÓ BORBÉLY



Since the very beginning of its existence, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) has stood up consistently for the implementation of minority rights in Romania and in Europe. This is one of the main priorities of the Alliance in the Parliament in Bucharest and in the Romanian Government, but this is the main focus abroad as well: namely that the European Union should recognize diversity as a common value and that it should support a joint engagement in the tasks sustaining this diversity. **László Borbély**, the political Vice-President of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, tells us more about the 22 years of work and its results.

The RMDSZ represents a minority that accounts for approximately 7% of Romania's total population. How is it possible that in spite of this the RMDSZ was able to play an active role both on the Romanian political scene and in the governing of the country during the last two decades?

I would first speak about our activity in the Government. It is important to know that the RMDSZ is an Alliance. Since we represent the rights of the ethnic Hungarian community living in Romania, it was a very important moment for us when the majority in the Romanian Parliament decided in 1996 to grant our Alliance a place in the governing coalition. This was crucial because a great deal of tensions and prejudice had been

...the RMDSZ can fulfill an important role in Romania's foreign policy...

accumulated against the ethnic Hungarian community ever since communist times, but afterwards as well - we have also been confronted with an interethnic conflict in 1990 in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş that has unfortunately in that period deeply affected the peaceful co-existence of the two communities. After taking over government roles starting with 1996, we began to feel that the Romanian community has accepted us, we were in charge of functions bearing high responsibility and, of course, we were accountable for the governing of the country, we were in charge of ministries and we could also be of help to our ethnic Hungarian community. This had a positive effect both on the coexistence of Romanians and ethnic Hungarians, and on the dismantling of the prejudices according to which ethnic Hungarians could not be entrusted with functions of high responsibility - because, we have to admit, there had been such prejudices under the communist and under Ceausescu's regime, but now we could step by step dismantle these in the Romanian public awareness.

How would you assess the political activity of the RMDSZ, looking now back on a work of more than a decade and a half?

Now, after 16 years of activity, we can say that we are not only accepted, but it goes without saying that I can for example be the President of the Foreign Policy Commit-

tee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament, or that the RMDSZ can fulfill an important role in Romania's foreign policy, and indeed, we did have an important role when Romania's application for NATO and EU membership was discussed, since we have been consulted as well. We have always pointed out that the rights of the national minorities have to be taken into account, but we also know that Europe and the entire world will appreciate if we are able to prove that we are present, if we chose the path of dialogue and intend to achieve various rights or forms of autonomy by political means. For that we need the approval of the majority and this is exactly how we were able to introduce in the constitution and in the text of various laws provisions that make the use of the mother-tongue possible and also provide the possibility of being educated in one's mother-tongue. But of course, there are other issues as well, as the restitution of forests to the communities in the areas inhabited by Szeklers. All these and other achievements, like the amendment of the constitution, would not have been possible without us being there and having the possibility to explain to our colleagues the importance of these matters, so that they could add to our 7% their 44 or 60%.

We still have a lot of work to do, there are talks now about cultural autonomy and other specific

issues, but I consider that the greatest achievement of the last 22 years the fact that the RMDSZ now has a say in the decision making process, that it is present where decisions are taken and can thus be of help both to the ethnic Hungarian community, and to the Romanian majority. I am convinced that our activity is appreciated, both in the regions where there are no Hungarians and in the regions inhabited by them which are indeed our focus areas, the Szekler region, Partium or central Transylvania, places where ethnic Hungarians feel that there is an Alliance, the RMDSZ, which stands up for their rights - and this fact is also accepted on the Romanian political scene.

What is the role of the RMDSZ in the Romanian foreign policy?

As far as foreign policy is concerned, I would like to point out the fact that we are able to pass on credible messages both in terms of minority related and of other issues as well. As President of the Foreign Policy Committee I see it day by day how ambassadors trust our opinion and somehow we are able to produce a reliable image of the Romanian political scene because our focus is a little bit different, we are an Alliance, not a political party, thus sometimes we are able to express more bluntly what is in Romania's best interest and consequently also in the best interest of its national minorities.



As in December '89 the Romanian communist-nationalist dictatorship collapsed, those who aimed to demolish the old system and build a new one had to face two challenges. This task was somewhat different from the problems faced by the countries of the former Socialist block, because not only the basic principles and institutions of democracy had to be reintroduced, but the question of nationality-ethnicity had to be answered wisely. There is a Hungarian minority living in Romania, which numbers more than one and a half million people. Their relation to the Romanian majority had to be managed by political-administrative instruments and it was not sufficient to talk about giving the rights "to persons belonging to minorities".

National Identities in a Unified Europe

By the way, these individual rights did not even exist at that time: we started almost from zero, we had to formulate our own goals and gradually develop the appropriate legal framework for them. This struggle is not finished yet, but in the last two decades we have progressed a lot. The most notable achievement was obtained in the field of mother-tongue education and public use of Hungarian: today, the Constitution guarantees these rights, and there is a law regulating a fully mother tongue-based school system, respectively allowing for the written and oral usage of the Hungarian language with the authorities in places where the number of the Hungarian popula-

tion is above 20%. I do not wish to enumerate now the rights we obtained and the rights still missing, because both lists would be long. While we are allowed to use our own national symbols freely, and we also managed to regain a fair number of private and public property previously nationalized, the general acceptance of collective rights and the establishment of various forms of autonomy are still pending. As I said before, inter-ethnic relations did not and still do not have such a weight in each Central and Eastern European country as in Romania, but this is not a unique situation either. It is enough to consider the former Yugoslavia for example, where the irresponsible handling of the minority issue led to ethnic wars and bloodshed. In contrast to

this, the Hungarians in Romania - but in Hungary's other neighboring countries as well - chose to "fight" this battle rather by political instruments, including dialogue, cooperation or even forming a coalition with a majority party.

At the end of '89 we established an organization to represent the interests of Hungarians: the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), by which we undoubtedly laid the foundations for long-term ethnic politics. This organization is still the only one representing the Hungarian community in the Romanian Parliament, and since 1996, except for a few years of interruption, it has been a member of different coalitions, and it delegates ministers, under-secretaries and other senior office-



The most notable achievement was obtained in the field of mother-tongue education and public use of Hungarian

BÉLA MARKÓ

holders. Of course, it should be emphasized that while the ethnic character of our organization is incontestable and we are ready to join coalitions on the left and the right as well, we are not ideology-free: since 1993 we had been members of the European Democratic Union and we automatically became members of the European People's Party. We decided while giving space to an internal political-ideological pluralism, to place ourselves in the center-right, because there the mission of our political program can be accomplished. I still think this was a good and important decision. But it's useful to look back from time to time to the moment when we Hungarians decided to fight for our rights only by political, parliamentary and local governmental means, and it's also useful to ask ourselves: in whom did we trust? Who could we count on during our struggle? Were we right or wrong?

The parallel is understandable: the Eastern European countries which under the oppression expected help from the West, expected after the collapse of the totalitarian regimes, European integration to establish democratic values for them.

Nevertheless already over two decades ago our expectations to receive a positive answer or some form of interference safeguarding our special regional, ethnic and national features from Europe under globalization might have appeared as a paradox. From a Europe currently breaking down borders - something we also desired - and of course I consider a very bad decision to postpone Romania's Schengen accession again. We expected the implementation of minority rights and the acceptance of various forms of autonomy from a Europe currently struggling to establish free and joint communicational and decision-making mechanisms, a Europe



which does not really know how to solve the question of twentieth and twenty-first century immigrants, or the centuries-old Roma issue.

Since 1993 I had been the president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. For 18 years I could follow the constantly changing interest of different European rapporteurs, of the European Union, the European Council and even of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in the national-ethnic minority issue. Thus I was able to see that behind human rights arguments there were often security considerations. I discussed with many about our situation and I saw how this issue was more and more silenced and pushed gradually into the background starting from the early nineties, after complying for a few years to the criteria laid down in the Helsinki and Copenhagen documents. And I could also see that for many years the USA gave us much more attention than Western Europe did and sometimes even helped us in minority rights-related issues, obviously, due to security reasons. Today, however, America's attention is also receding. So, I ask again: wasn't it an illusion to expect support in the application of national or ethnic equality from a Europe fighting the difficulties of globalization?

I am still convinced that we were not wrong to expect the Member States of the European Union to jointly find solutions to protect national, cultural, linguistic identities. And, despite all appearances, it is not the economic challenge which is the most difficult to deal with but the challenge related to national identities. These two can sometimes intertwine: today, some of the richer countries may think that it would be easier to face the crisis within national frameworks and that showing solidarity towards poorer countries would only hold them back, but this is just a momentary misunderstanding. In the long run, no form of autarchy functions as good as a unified European economy. In my opinion, the future of the European Union depends not on how it deals with the economic crisis even though this is also a very important factor but on how it combines different national identities, an issue which also includes economic factors. The future depends on how we interpret this integration: either we plan to gradually dissolve national identities and to reconstruct them as a common European identity - and then we might possibly fail - or we take European identity as a mosaic which even though it has its common identification marks on the outside, on the inside is a colorful environment where various nations and ethnic groups have their own means of preserving their identity. Because it is not enough to adopt this or that attitude only on an emotional level: one must create legal and institutional means for such a Europe to function. The European Union's most important feature remains that we are all, even the greatest nations, minorities within a common Europe. This gives room for a feeling of moderate optimism that we, the so-called actual minorities, can profit from this situation, because as borders disappear, new means must be developed to protect national identities. It is not

by coincidence that in the European Union the right to vote in local and European parliamentary elections is not connected to citizenship but to the place of residence and that some countries are trying to connect the issue of national identity with a citizenship independent of residence. One thing is certain: the effective antidote for the newly appearing ideas of nationalism, fundamentalism or xenophobia is not to melt dissimilarities as this would be impossible but to validate the equality of national identities and to elaborate European guidelines for this as soon as possible.

In the end, I consider that the choice is obvious, and it is urgent to decide: in a Europe trying to unite complying to common criteria even in the smallest details, multilingualism and multiculturalism will sooner or later lose their meaning. I don't think that we want this, not even if the sobering shocks of the economic crisis will furnish arguments even for those, who want to introduce strict standards in the whole

Europe. To talk about free identities, national-ethnic diversities in such hard times must be irritating indeed.

However, I consider that it's a perfect time to raise this issue, so that not the centrifugal, but the centripetal forces could prevail, and Brussels would not push but attract everybody. A United States of Europe, as it is heard already here and there, would make sense not by becoming the melting pot of nations, as the United States of America did, but by finding the balance between the common economic, security, environmental interests and the specific language, cultural and religious values.

Maybe I am too naive, but I think that, despite all appearances, there is a chance to achieve this.

And we, Hungarians living in Romania hope that such a Europe will provide us with new instruments to keep our identity.

BÉLA MARKÓ
senator,

former president of the RMDSZ



The varied and pluralist character of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) is evident when one considers its ideological platforms. The Christian Democratic Platform is among the most important ones. Its aim is to give Christian Democratic ideas due emphasis in Hungarian Transylvanian social life. **Kálmán Kelemen**, president of the platform talks about the objectives and activity of the platform.

Christian Democracy as Vital Ideology to Hungarians

What is the role of the Christian Democratic Platform in the life of the Alliance and the Hungarian community in Transylvania?

Christian Democratic ideas have a significant and determining role in the life of the Hungarian community in Romania. We all know how Christian Democrats contributed to the reconstruction of Europe after World War II. Despite signs of crisis, the results reached in Europe are also an outcome of the efforts to form the social life of the continent in the spirit of Christian Democratic values. The Hungarian community in Romania was integrated in this process in the spring of 1990 when a group of 10 people founded the Hungarian Christian Democratic Party in Romania. Within a few years we realized we needed to cooperate with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania in order to preserve the unity of the Hungarian community in Transylvania. Thus after having been a party we became the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement in Romania and ended up as the Christian Democratic Platform integrated into the varied organizational life of the Alliance.



What are the programs and initiatives of the Christian Democratic Platform?

The activity carried out within the platform focuses on presenting the values and principles of the Hungarian community in Transylvania. Our aim is to emphasize the importance of the unity of Hungarians living in scattered groups in Romania and to do that in the Christian Democratic spirit focusing on the values of family life and proper education in order to raise responsible future citizens. The Christian Democratic Platform of the RMDSZ was the first movement to tackle the issue of historical and immigrant minorities on international level. It is our conviction that historical minorities should receive a different treatment as compared to immigrant ones.

Would you talk about the international relations of the Platform?

The Christian Democratic Platform of the RMDSZ has established extended international relations. Owing to our relations established with the Austrian MP of EPP in 1991-92 we were credited international attention and had the opportunity to present the Hungarian Christian Democratic movement in Romania, the expectations of the Hungarian community in Transylvania and their fight for survival as a self-identical community. As an outcome of our good relations and cooperation with the president of the Vienna Academy we were able to train a few politicians at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. The Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement in Romania was the first Eastern European movement to become a member of the former European Christian Democratic Union, the Christian Democrat International. We are internationally acknowledged members of the European People's Party. As a token of our gratitude for the excellent cooperation with the EPP we have given Wilfried Martens, president of the EPP a bronze memorial plaque for his 75th birthday.



PÉTER KOVÁCS

The chapter opened in 2011 gave new impetus to the RMDSZ. How did this impetus show across the activity of the organization?

The renewal of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania began in 2003 with the creation of the Hungarian Youth Council comprising by now over 300 youth organizations. This is our background for continuously preparing young and gifted politicians. The new chapter and new impetus are actually based on a process of upwards construction: our young politicians come to discover the organization step by step, gradually reaching a position where they can demonstrate their ability to work for the benefit of various communities and can, by the results they might have reached, gain the trust of these communities. The changes effected in 2011 are not to imply that whatever happened before was wrong but to ensure the continuity of our work in fulfilling the tasks entrusted upon us by the Hungarian community, and doing that by new, modern means and under the guidance of new leaders.

During the latest campaigns the RMDSZ tried to convince its electors employing new communication methods. What came new in trying to summon Hungarian communities to the urn?

The key to our campaigns is direct contact. We have lately decided to reduce the number of mass events during which politicians would talk to hundreds or thousands of people from the podium. We try to knock on each door instead, to contact each family and thus to map the exact expectations and problems of our electors, to acknowledge their opinion concerning the Alliance, our politicians and the work we have done. We are keen on listening to people's problems and on establishing a dialogue instead of a monologue.

In 2011, the life of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania came to a new chapter: a young, professional team took matters over from the former leadership. Which was by far a difficult situation: the new leaders were aware of the significant results reached by their predecessors and of the stakes raised quite high. The aim is nevertheless to meet expectations and raise those stakes even higher. **Péter Kovács**, the young secretary general to the Alliance is accountable for a successful communication of the RMDSZ. It is his task to make the projects and results of the new leadership and re-designed organization known to its electors, to the Hungarian community in Transylvania.

Another key to our communication is continuous campaigning. As soon as we close a campaign, we start a new one the next day. Obviously our focus is not on mobilization in "quiet" times, yet we run various thematic campaigns in order to sustain and secure the contact established with our voters. It is very important to explore the possibilities available through the Internet and through various social networks. We have even established an entire team to drain the maximum out of these. Even if it is far from probable to win an election campaign over the Internet, those not present on the net are practically inexistent.

By what particular communication strategies do you intend to reach your electors during the autumn campaign preceding the parliamentary elections?

Our campaign is organized on three levels that actually add up to a pyramid scheme.

The local level is the most "crowded" one. It consists of local RMDSZ organizations, local authorities headed by our mayors and of youth organizations and NGOs with whom we usually cooperate, whether during campaigns or not.

The second level is that of election district campaigns designed for our candidates and focused on their promotion and on the communication of their messages.

On the third and highest level we contribute to our local and election district campaigns with the overall message and central slogan of the Alliance and with the interference of our leading politicians.

These levels need to work on their own but also as a harmonic whole. Each of them should transmit messages of the same spirit and each of them should reinforce the same thing: that the Alliance is an organization designed

We are keen on listening to people's problems...

The Key to Our Success: Continuous Communication

to represent the interests of our electors.

Does the Alliance think differentiated messages for compact and small Hungarian communities in Romania should be conjured up?

We focus on our results in our campaigns but we are also openly talking about our failures which we obviously account for. The most important thing is to formulate realistic objectives that can be realized during the next mandate or mandates. We can only remain reliable if we formulate reachable objectives and produce actual results instead of promising the accomplishment of intangible dreams. Our messages need to be differentiated as expectations vary from region to region according to the conditions in which Hungarians live there, whether in 80% majority or minority communities. Then again the message should be quite different for those who live in small, scattered groups, in mixed marriages or for those who have no possibility to speak Hungarian or meet Hungarians at work. This is not to imply that some of our messages directed towards various regions are contradictory, only that the emphasis might fall on different things within different messages.

To mention a practical example: Hungarian is theoretically not the language of official use in the Szekler region yet in practice it is, as people in offices and institutions speak Hungarian as a rule. In this region our aim is to obtain official status for Hungarian on a regional level.

On the other hand the percentage of Hungarians in several counties is quite low thus in these counties we are not pursuing official status for the language. In these locations our aim is to secure education in Hungarian for the young and to preserve Hungarian culture and traditions.

Considering the political situation and the increasingly nationalistic voices, what political message will the RMDSZ formulate for the coming parliamentary elections, and by what methods will you promote this message among your electors?

We will organize our messages on three different levels. The first important message is that us, Romanian Hungarians, we wish to live, raise our children, preserve and transmit our culture, traditions and spiritual heritage where we were born, meaning that we want to live as Hungarians in Romania.

The second message concerns our daily life and its economic aspects: as long as we wish to exist as Hungarians in our native country, we need acceptable standards of living and these imply a safe social environment and proper jobs as well.

The third message makes it clear: only the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania can properly represent the interests and values of Hungarian communities in Romania. We need to make people aware of the dangers inherent in Hungarians losing their parliamentary representation in Romania. The most important decisions concerning Hungarian communities are taken in Bucharest and by local self-governments in Transylvania. Consequently we need to reach as far as the parliament and the local authorities, even the Romanian government if that be possible. History can at any point turn backwards. We witness quite enough extreme initiatives: nationalism is far from being history. Twenty-three years after the political changes in Romania Hungarians still need to participate and have a proper say in the decision-making bodies of this country in order to keep the nationalist rhetoric out of Romanian public life.

The RMDSZ at the 2012 Local Elections

On the 10th of June 2012, local elections took place in Romania. Administratively, Romania is divided into 41 counties (plus Bucharest) and 3185 municipalities (cities, towns and communes). Though their competences are only regulatory, both counties and municipalities have directly elected representative bodies (councils) and executive institutions (mayors and county council presidents). Romania is also divided into eight development regions, however, these don't have any competences or elected bodies.

The local elections - usually held in early summer have traditionally been considered the main rehearsal for the parliamentary elections due in the winter, but this year their importance was further augmented by the economic crisis and the increasingly polarized political situation, which later evolved into the probably most severe political crisis of the post-communist period.

The RMDSZ has been one of the most stable actors on the Romanian party scene since 1990. Relying primarily on the votes of the Hungarian minority, its electoral results are more or less predetermined by the size of this group (1.24 million in 2011, 6.5% of the population), but the nature of the electorate also warrants electoral stability. Notwithstanding this, this year's elections have been quite a challenge for the RMDSZ, for manifold reasons.

First, RMDSZ participated, along with PDL and UNPR, in the center-right government of Emil Boc, which had the very unrewarding mission of leading the country through the economic crisis. Popular dissatisfaction was growing on the background of an IMF deal and austerity measures, until large-scale street protests led to the resignation of the prime minister in February. The new cabinet of M. R. Ungureanu, made up of the same parties, only resisted 78 days, as several MPs switched to the emerging new parliamentary majority in a motion of no confidence. Thus, by the time of local elections the USL alliance (made up of the Socialists and National Liberals) was already governing. Yet, it was obvious that voters would express their opinion not only about local issues, but would also assess the performance of the previous government, and due to the socio-economic situation, everything was given for the latter to bear the negative consequences of incumbency, even if already out of power.

Second, but also related to the difficult conditions of the country, the Hungarian minority witnessed a resurgence of nationalist sentiment before the elections, which found expression especially in relation to the unsettled situation at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş, the only academic institution of medical education in Romania providing training in Hungarian language. The leadership of the UMP refused to implement the new education law and to set up a separate Hungarian faculty, which would have put education in both languages on an equal footing by enhancing the decision-making opportunities of the Hungarian part. The Ungureanu cabinet attempted to create the faculty by governmental decree, but this decision served as the main pretext for the motion of no confidence which eventually led to its downfall. The incoming cabinet of Victor Ponta proved reluctant to make concessions, and the stalemate still continues.

Third, several crucial institutional reforms have been on the agenda lately, most importantly the issue of administrative-territorial reorganization and a reform of the electoral system. The administrative reform involved the redrawing of the borders of the regions, and possibly transferring some competences to them from the counties. The proposals of both the main coalition partner PDL and of the opposition threatened with the "partitioning" of the predominantly Hungarian Szekler area, by allocating the three Szekler counties into different regions, while the RMDSZ tried to obtain a region made up of these three counties. Though the status quo was preserved, the issue will surely resurface after the parliamentary elections, and RMDSZ will have to do its best to prevent a disadvantageous settlement.

The parliamentary electoral reform was initiated by the Ponta government in May 2012. The new law replaced the essentially proportional electoral system with something similar to the British plurality rule. While a pure plurality system would have expressly prevented the election of RMDSZ MPs in counties where Hungarians do not form a majority, a compromise was reached eventually (special seats were offered to minorities in counties where their share is above 7%). Yet, even in this form, the consequences on minority representation could have been negative in the long run, as the incentives to vote for RMDSZ candidates in districts with a low share

of Hungarians have been drastically reduced. Also, the law would have created the conditions of a landslide victory for the USL alliance. The Constitutional Court repelled the law eventually.

Last, but not least, after RMDSZ had to face competition from the Hungarian Civic Party in 2008, this

year the number of intra-community challengers doubled with the emergence of the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania. Although the support of RMDSZ's Hungarian opponents in the community is rather low, the tone of the campaign became more negative than ever this year.

The results of the RMDSZ at the local elections

Despite defining itself as an ethno-regionalist party, RMDSZ attempted to maximize its territorial coverage, by reaching out to localities where it did not run before, where Hungarians live in low numbers, including communities located

The RMDSZ in the local councils after the 2012 local elections

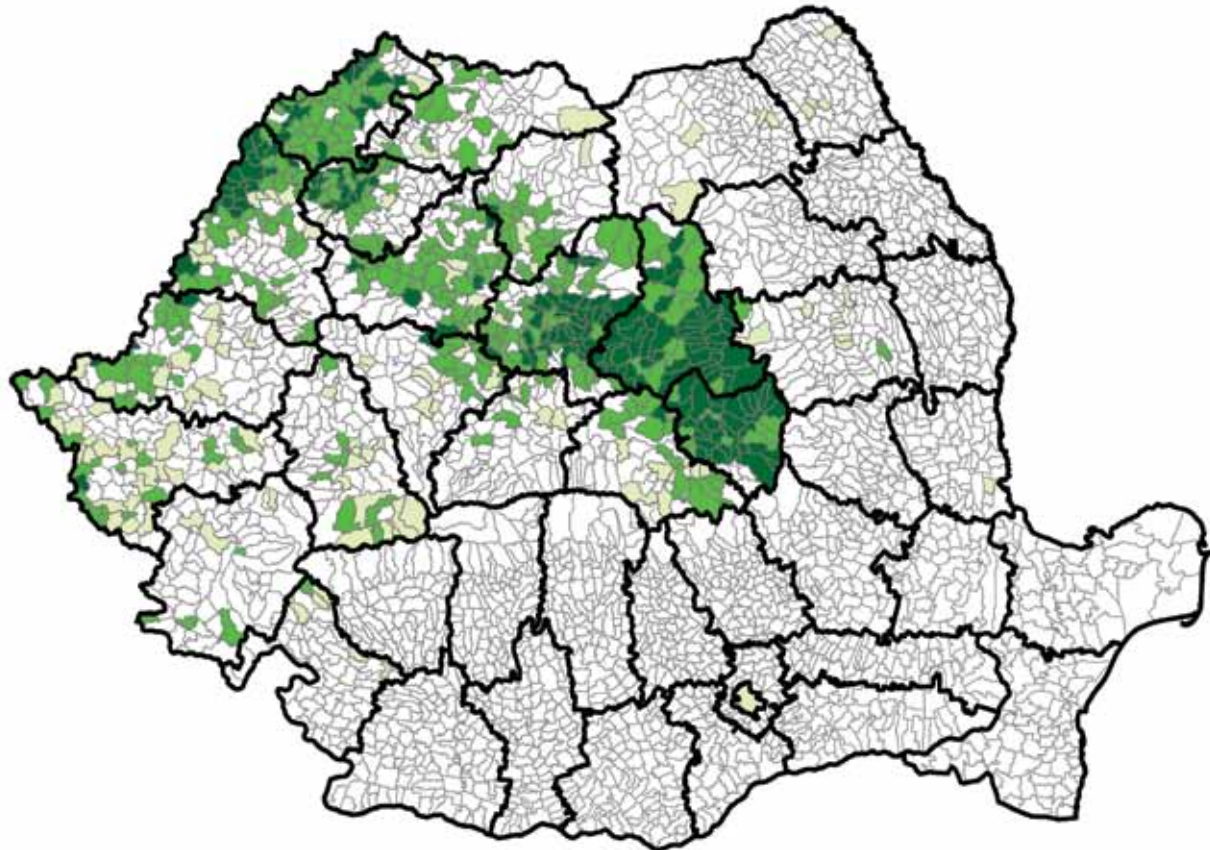
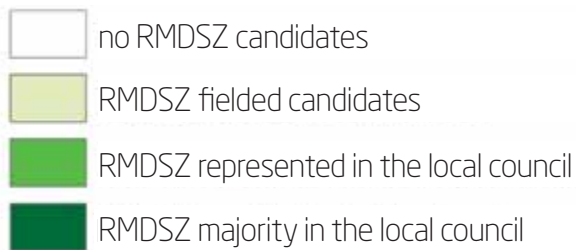


Table 1. The results of RMDSZ at the last three local elections

Year	Turnout		Mayor	Local council	County council president	County council
2004	50.85%	ran in ... localities/counties	333	528	(indirect election)	20
		votes	379787	455625		513165
		%	4.06	4.92	(4)	5.67
		seats	186	2481		112
		in ... localities/counties		453		11
2008	48.81%	ran in ... localities/counties	360	567	12	22
		votes	378413	404657	419028	429329
		%	4.28	4.75	5,26	5.14
		seats	184	2195	4	89
		in ... localities/counties		455		10
2012	56.26%	ran in ... localities/counties	321	587	14	22
		votes	421794	455855	485666	491864
		%	3.90	4.30	4,95	5.52
		seats	203	2261	2	88
		in ... localities/counties		462		10

Source: Central Electoral Bureau

outside Transylvania. There are two main motivations behind such a strategy: first, RMDSZ local organizations help maintain the identity of these Hungarian communities, and second, wide territorial coverage is very important at the parliamentary elections.

As shown in Table 1, RMDSZ improved its results in 2012 as compared to 2008, especially concerning mayors and local councils. The higher vote figures are partly due to a general increase in turnout, but also reflect improved mobilization among Hungarians. Yet, due to the higher general turnout, some of RMDSZ's remarkable

2008 results could not be repeated. Most importantly, RMDSZ lost the presidency of Maros/Mureş and Szatmár/Satu Mare counties. As the share of Hungarians is below 40% in both of these counties, a Hungarian candidate can only be successful if Hungarians turn out in significantly higher proportions than the average, or if the vote for the mainstream Romanian parties is split. While four years ago both conditions obtained, this year none of them, as Romanian citizens turned out in unusually high numbers and voted overwhelmingly for the USL alliance.

The local elections confirmed RMDSZ's weight on the Romanian political scene and reinforced it as the primary representative of the Hungarian minority. RMDSZ once again preserved the support of an overwhelming majority within the community (about 85%), the two challengers having to content themselves with the remaining 15%. These convincing results provide grounds for optimism for the parliamentary elections due in December, although the context will again be defined by the still persisting nationalist discourses and the challenge of the two smaller Hungarian parties.

ISTVÁN GERGŐ SZÉKELY
political scientist





“We need to present the values of our minority life in Europe: a specific world based on our life and experience. Each element of the programs I design focuses on a typical field of Transylvanian excellence.”

Csaba Sógor (MEP)

Parliamentary activities:

RMDSZ Member of the European Parliament (EP) (since 2007)

Member of the Group of the European People’s Party (EPP)

EP Committees:

Member: of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)

Substitute: of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)

EP Delegations:

Member: of the Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Substitute: of the Delegation for relations with Japan



Csaba Sógor completes his legislative activity by organizing high level events of cultural politics in Brussels, designed to call the attention of European decision-makers to the Hungarian community in Transylvania, onto the notable performances of this community as well as onto the multicultural character of the region. Transylvania is an old and extremely rich region of European multiculturalism, a place of valuable and best practices which are to be followed.

While an MEP, Csaba Sógor has promoted the world of these specific values sprung from the life of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania by organizing exhibitions, puppet-shows, actions promoting Szekler products, conferences and by disseminating various publications and short films on the listed topics.

With the support of Csaba Sógor MEP, in 2008 the EP was host to an exhibition by Transylvanian photographer **Gyula Ádám**, awarded for his work by the *National Geographic* as well. The photographs of the exhibition entitled **My Transylvania** present traditional Transylvanian professions and landscapes, folk traditions, individual portraits and characteristic still lives.

Csaba Sógor organized in Brussels also a conference with the title **Living Transylvania** presenting five Transylvanian domains of excellence:

Béla Markó emphasized the importance of our common European identity and elaborated on the present dilemma of the Hungarian community in Transylvania: “How can we stay French, German, Hungarian or Romanian while being Europeans according to the requirements of a European Union without borders?”

Vilmos Tánzos presented a lecture on ethnography focused on Transylvanian Hungarian folk culture and completed by a rich and detailed photographic material.

Smaranda Enache has traced the Transylvanian community model as a compound of rules concerning the coexistence of several communities and the intimacy of community life and as an equilibrium of cultural differences and European interests.

Gábor Tompa director of the Kolozsvár/Cluj Hungarian Theatre talked about the 215 years of Hungarian drama in Kolozsvár/Cluj, about the tradition and the outstanding personalities of Transylvanian Hungarian

theatrical life. The Hungarian company is a member of the Union of the Theatres of Europe.

After presenting the centuries and performances of Transylvanian Hungarian philosophy **Péter Egyed** focused on the philosophical means in the evolution of the ethical and cultural self-reference of minorities. These lectures are available on the site www.sogorcsaba.eu, but they were also published in an English and French bilingual edition.

The Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş **Teleki-Bolyai Library** is the richest Transylvanian archive of the European printed culture of the past centuries. It boasts over two hundred thousand volumes, it is a valuable scientific and encyclopedic collection and it also has several rare bibliophile editions. It consists of two basic collections, the 40 000 volumes **Teleki Library** and the 80 000 volumes **Bolyai Library**. The Teleki Library opened its gates as one of the first public libraries on Hungarian soil in 1802. It has functioned without a break ever since. The Bolyai Library consists of the heritage of the world famous explorer of non-Euclidian geometry, **János Bolyai** and of **Farkas Bolyai**, his father, also a mathematician.

In 2009 at the initiative of Csaba Sógor, the then director of the library presented in the Cultural Committee of the EP the work of the library founder chancellor **Sámuel Teleki** and the history of the collections at the bases of the library.

Promoting the spiritual heritage of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania and the outstanding personalities of this community, the 170th anniversary of **Sándor Kőrösi Csoma** was commemorated. The Szekler-Hungarian linguist and librarian was founder of Tibetology and author of the first Tibetan-English dictionary.

In April 2012, at an invitation of Csaba Sógor, Dr. **Imre Bangha** Indologist, professor at the University of Oxford and president of the "Sándor Kőrösi Csoma" Institute of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, gave a lecture entitled "Bridges Between Tibet and Europe" within the Tibet Intergroup of the EP.

LIVING TRANSYLVANIA
Conference held in the European Parliament

Péter EGYED
philosopher, writer, university professor
Smaranda ENACHE
co-chair, proEuropa League
Béla MARKÓ
poet, politician, president DAHR
Vilmos TÁNCZOS
ethnographer, university professor
Gábor TOMPA
theatre director

Event hosted by Csaba SÓGOR MEP EPP-ED

Transylvania is an old and extremely rich region of European multiculturalism, a place of valuable best practices to be followed.

"I am convinced that within the EPP, the RMDSZ, as the legitimate representative of the Hungarian community in Romania has the ability and strength to be part of all the processes shaping the Europe of tomorrow."

Iuliu WINKLER (MEP)

Member

Committee on International Trade
Delegation for relations with India

Substitute

Committee on Regional Develop-
ment
Delegation to the EU-Chile Joint
Parliamentary Committee
Delegation to the Euro-Latin Ameri-
can Parliamentary Assembly

Member of the Bureau of the Euro-
pean People's Party (Christian
Democrats) Group

President of the Hunedoara county
branch of the RMDSZ
Head of the Szórvány Group in the
Assembly of the Delegates

Iuliu Winkler has been a member of the RMDSZ since 1991, president of the Hunedoara County branch since 2001. In the last decade he was member of the Assembly of Delegates. In 1996, Mr. Winkler was elected member of the Hunyad/Hunedoara County Council. In 1999, he was appointed deputy prefect of Hunyad/Hunedoara County. At the parliamentary elections in 2000 he was elected Member of the Chamber of Deputies. He was a member of the Committee on budget, finance and banks and the European integration committee. Between 2004 and 2007 Winkler serves as Minister Delegate for Trade at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce. From July to December 2007 he held the

portfolio of Minister of Communica-
tions and Information Technology. He
was elected member of the European
Parliament in 2007 and later in 2009.

A convinced euro-optimist, Mr. Winkler campaigned and acted dur-
ing his political activity for Roma-
nia's accession to the European
Union. It is his firm belief that only
in a European Union, the Hungarian
community and the entire Romanian
society can progress and fulfil its
destiny. Moreover, in his view, the
prosperity and the future develop-
ment of the European Union will be
achieved only in a Europe of regions
and communities. He promotes the
political and economic deepening of
the EU, being the adept of a strong
and federal Europe.

The protection of the European
historical minorities is one of the
most important items on the agenda
of Mr. Winkler. As stated in the basic
program of the RMDSZ our aim is
to achieve the adoption of legally
binding community standards and
norms for the protection of persons
belonging to minorities at the level
of the EU. The MEP together with
fellow members and minority or-
ganisations uses every opportunity
to raise the awareness of the Euro-
pean Parliament regarding the pro-
tection of national minorities. The
RMDSZ Members of the European
Parliament also brought pro-active
presence and intense cooperation
with the European People's Party,
which resulted important contribu-
tions to the basic program and other
documents of the EPP.

Iuliu Winkler had dealt with
many topics in the past years,
the community policies targeting



the small Hungarian communities living in interethnic minority (Szórvány) is a continuous struggle aiming the survival of these small communities. In this sense, the policy of the RMDSZ in the past two decades has been definitive. In 2011 the strategy for small communities of the RMDSZ was placed on new basis and new tools were created. On the 15th of November 2011, the birthday of Bethlen Gábor Transylvanian prince, the Day of the Szórvány was celebrated for the first time. In Mr. Winkler's vision the small communities have to build their future, fill their schools with students, the Hungarian Cultural Centres need to have quality repertoires with the help of civil organizations, historical churches and other denominations.

MEP Winkler's work in the European Parliament is defined primarily by the topics included in the agenda that are equally important for Romania, for Transylvania, for the Hungarian communities and for the EU as a whole. The preparation of the budgetary period after 2014 and the definition of all the different EU goals concerning it are of great importance for his country. The development of cohesion and regional policies in the Committee of Regional Development is also important. The discussion about the trade agreement with many of the EU's major partners was on the agenda of the International Trade Committee in which he participated with the conviction that the EU has to act in a uniform way and has to aim for reciprocity in the global market, thus strengthening its position in the global competition. In the EP Mr. Winkler follows closely the further expansion of the European Union, promoting to accession of the Western Balkans in the European Union and advocates for Moldova Republic's European course. He is also one of the supporters of the SME sector in Europe.

Romania has been member of the European Union for five years, but this period did not bring the expected results in every field: the EU funds were not put to use at a satisfactory level; the amount of modernization and the pace at which the country was catching up to others did not live up to our expectations. If we compare the situation of Romania to that of the ten countries that became members of the European Union in 2004, we can see that the initial period was a difficult one everywhere. The conclusion is that performance is needed without delay. The Transylvania 2020 development plan



proposed by the Economic Council of the RMDSZ, on the initiative of Mr. Winkler creates this opportunity. The goal of this plan is the efficient use of EU funds for the modernization of Transylvania, but a change of mentality is also important to achieve. Professionals, leaders of local governments, governmental professionals are the ones preparing the departmental and regional programmes in the Transylvania 2020 developmental plan.

"We need a Union of solidarity, a Europe that is strong. And for this, the process of passing sovereignty to Brussels needs to continue. Of course, the way in which this is done is not secondary either. The reins of transformation must be handed over to the ever strengthening common decision-making establishment under the control of the European Parliament. The outcome of this process is referred to by some as the United States of Europe. I call it the Europe of Regions, the Europe of Communities."

Mikó Case 13020



What's the Mikó Case 13020?

13020 is the case number of a highly disputed Court ruling in Romania. It concerns the property right of the Hungarian Reformed Church over a more than a century old high school building in Sepsiszentgörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania.

Recently by means of a politically motivated decision the Romanian judiciary renationalized the Székely Mikó Kollégium (Székely Mikó High School), which had rightfully been returned to the Reformed Church in 2002. At the same time the two Hungarian members of the Restitution Committee, Attila MARKÓ and Tamás MAROSÁN, were sentenced to three years of imprisonment, while the third member of the Committee, Silviu CLIM, of Romanian nationality, was sentenced to three years of suspended imprisonment. An appeal has been filed.

The history of the Székely Mikó High School from Sepsiszentgörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe

In the region of Háromszék (Covasna county, Romania) the first school was created in the 1850s with the joined efforts of priests of the Reformed Church, elementary school teachers and nobles from several municipalities, especially Count Imre Mikó who, amongst other important donations, ceded land for the building. Therefore, the municipality decided to name the school by including the most important founders of it: Református Tanoda Székely Mikó (Székely Mikó Public Reformed School).

In 1948, during the Communist regime, the Romanian state nationalised the Református Székely Mikó Kollégium changing its name several times and turning the language of education from Hungarian into Romanian. The school regained its initial name and language of education in 1989, after the fall of the communist regime and the restitution was consented in 2002.

The process of the restitution of the Székely Mikó High School

Following the fall of the communist regime one of the most important aims of the Hungarian community from Romania has been to recover confiscated properties. Creating the legal background for this process and proving property rights under the existing law has been a difficult and yet unfinished task, sometimes full of contradictions. In spite of this, the past fifteen years have been marked by a series of gratifications.

The Romanian Government Emergency Decree no. 83 adopted in 1999, after the year 2000 listed cca. 90 former Church properties to be restituted. The list, including the Székely Mikó High School, was based on the claims submitted by the churches, reviewed by the ministers of Minority Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance and passed to the government for approval.

A Restitution Committee was formed for the restitution of properties and had an examining function: it did not have to determine whether or not the properties would be restituted to their owners, but instead it had to examine whether the documentation of the respective property was adequate. The land registration of the respective property could occur solely on the basis of the protocol prepared by the Committee.

The members of the Committee were appointed by the head of the respective institution: **Attila MARKÓ**, the representative of the institution that initiated the law, i.e. the Office of Minority Affairs, Silviu **CLIM** on behalf of the Ministry of Justice and **Tamás MAROSÁN**, legal counsel to the episcopate, the representative of the Reformed Church that initiated the restitution. They have signed all the protocols as the representatives of the respective institutions. The three-member Committee was active between 1999 and 2002.

A short background of the case trial

At the time of the restitution - in spite of the objection of the municipality and the Reformed Church, two individuals, former subtenants, purchased apartments belonging to the campus of the High School. They intended civil law suit against the Reformed Church, attempting to prevent the restitution of the High School. The civil action was won by the defendant, the Reformed Church. In 2006 the ownership was given to the church.

On March 15, 2006, after the conclusion of the civil action, the families filed a criminal suit against 7 people. They brought a suit against the employees of the Land Registry Office that registered the building and issued the land certificate. They accused them of forgery. They also brought a suit against one of the church representatives, accusing him of forgery as well, and three members of the Restitution Committee. By the time the investigation started, the crimes of four individuals had been barred by the statute of limitations. Thus, in the end criminal action was instituted only against the members of the Committee.

After the criminal complaint the National Anticorruption Department (DNA) of the Office of the General Prosecutor took over the investigation. Based on the complainers' faked evidence the DNA accused all the three members of the committee of abuse of authority. The prosecution requested the transfer of the case from the Tribunal of Sepsiszentgyörgy/ Sfântu Gheorghe to the Tribunal of Buzău stating that "the local court can't be objective because of the hostile atmosphere".

During the trial the defendants presented several pieces of evidence. They presented all the documents confirming the committee's legal status, including the restitution law and the final and irrevocable rules of the Appeal Court of Braşov and that of the Constitutional



Courts. In addition all the documents proving the property's ownership, land registry, nationalization decree and former Court decisions were presented. As proof of their innocence the defendants have shown that no material damages have been created.

The DNA argued that the Reformed Church in Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe was not the owner of the buildings of the Mikó College but rather the Romanian government since the buildings were mainly built thanks to public donations. This development is extremely perilous primarily because a significant portion of our churches and community buildings belonging to the church were also built thanks to public donations. According to this logic, a house rebuilt by joint efforts from materials provided by the community of a village is also the property of the government as it was built thanks to public donations! On the other hand, out of 1.100 restitutions this is the first (and only) case where criminal proceedings were instituted.

Despite all facts and presented evidences the primary Court sen-

tenced **Attila MARKÓ** and **Tamás MAROSÁN** to 3 years of imprisonment and sentenced **Silviu CLIM** to 3 years of suspended prison term, reasoning that the Romanian nationality member Silviu Clim is retired and has a severe heart condition.

Furthermore the Reformed Church is obliged to pay 1.2 million lei - 270.000 EUR - to the local government, the value of the rent that was paid in order to ensure the public school's continued operation in that building.

What's the message of the court's decision for the Hungarian community in Romania?

We consider the sentence as a serious threat and attack against the whole Hungarian community in Romania.

We consider that each Hungarian individual member of the Committee was sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment, because our whole community aimed the restitution of the properties after five decades of communist regime. Thus everybody who implements the law might be

condemned in the future to 3 years of prison.

We might be back again in times when Church and community property is nationalized by a mere signature. Such Court decisions and fake trials serve as precedents to mayors, prosecutors, and practically to anyone who would intend the restitution of formerly nationalized properties.

Meanwhile these decisions bear an important message to the Hungarian community: given rights may be taken away. It also causes doubts concerning the independence of the judiciary and makes people sceptical about the ability of the legal system to seek for the truth and defend their elementary rights, such as the right to private ownership.

The Court sentence is an attack against the fundamental rights of the individual, it is anti-European and it is aimed against the Hungarian ethnic community in Romania.

We invite all political and civic organisations, church leaders and other leaders, organizations, institutions and all those who consider this sentence irrational and abusive, aimed against the Hungarian minority in Romania to express their protest against and solidarity in this abusive situation.

Please, put it down in your agenda, discuss and bring to public attention the information we shared with you and thus help us enforce the state of law and justice in Romania.





The Hungarian Educational System in Romania

"I am truly myself but in my mother-tongue."

(Kosztolányi Dezső)

Introduction

The Transylvanian Hungarian educational system with a tradition of several centuries integrated from its very beginnings into the European scientific circuit is a vital element of the identity of Hungarians in Romania. Even though learning Romanian is a must for citizens of the country, the political and civilian endeavors of this community all pursue the establishment of a proper and complete educational system in one's mother tongue. The community in question is one that lives in direct vicinity to its nation of similar language and culture (the people of Hungary). It also is an ethnic community that has for the last 1100 years lived on its native land and numbers as much as the population of Estonia or the double of the population of Cyprus or four times the population of Iceland.

Hungarians in Romania all share the view that their children need to study in their mother-tongue on all educational levels, from kindergarten to the university. According to Romanian professionals in the field of education, children can study best in the language they first acquire: in their mother-tongue. This is valid not only for elementary school pupils, it holds good for secondary school, high school pupils and university students as well. Children studying in their mother-tongue have better skills in learning second and third languages, they are better in learning

Romanian, the official language of the country. Members of the Hungarian community in Romania share a series of cultural experiences that are transmitted to children within the Hungarian educational system. The school system of Hungarians living on territories now part of the Romanian state was founded several centuries ago, was modernized during the nineteenth century thus it is part of the culture of this community, it is part of its social heritage as well.

Statistics

Today members of this community can study in their mother-tongue in:

- 1202 kindergartens (approx. 32.000 children aged 2-7),
- 920 elementary schools (approx. 39.000 children aged 7-11),
- 524 secondary schools (approx. 36.500 children aged 11-15),
- 156 high schools (approx. 26.500 pupils) and
- 5 academic institutions (10.000 students).

Most of these institutions are of mixed languages of study. This means that in such places there are classes of Hungarian children studying in Hungarian and of Romanian children studying in Romanian. Hungarian pupils study Romanian, the only official language of Romania, each day at school. (Romanian is the only official language even in the region where, on a territory of 13.000 square kilometers, the over-

whelming majority of the population is Hungarian.) Beside educational institutions of mixed languages of study, there are schools where the language of study is exclusively Hungarian, especially in settlements of mostly Hungarian population and in historical Hungarian cities (Kolozsvár/Cluj, Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş, Nagyvárad/Oradea, Szatmár/Satu-Mare). These as a rule are Hungarian institutions established several hundred years ago.

In autumn 2012, 9874 Hungarian children began their first grade at the elementary school while in summer a number of 8352 Hungarian pupils graduated from high-school taking their graduation exams in Hungarian.

Many Hungarian pupils decide on their own to study at Romanian schools nevertheless there are many Hungarians as well who are forced to study in Romanian especially in regions where Hungarians live in minority groups and cannot implement their educational needs or where owing to the reduced number of Hungarian pupils Hungarian schools are not possible to support. During the elaboration of the new law on education, the RMDSZ has made its coalition partners adopt a series of paragraphs that do, in certain ways, solve these problems.

Historical background

Being a historical and not an immigrant community, the history

of the educational system of the Hungarian community in Romania comprises all the significant European ages from schools sustained by medieval churches to colleges founded by Hungarian kings, from education made prosperous by Protestantism to the Jesuit educational system, to the Age of Enlightenment and the emerging modern school system of the nineteenth century.

An outstanding moment in this history is the Kolozsvár/Cluj University founded in 1851 by István Báthory, Hungarian prince and king of Poland. Going through various phases the University survived until 1918, when Romania occupied Transylvania. During this period the institution became one of the most important Hungarian academic venues of European stance.

This educational system produced world famous scientists such as Farkas Bolyai, founder through his work entitled *Appendix* of the non-Euclidean geometry, on which several theories in twentieth century physics are based. The inventor of the first central telephone switchboard, Tivadar Puskás was Transylvanian Hungarian as well.

In 1918 the troupes of the neighboring Romania occupied Transylvania and several other Hungarian territories westward, practically the eastern quarter of a Hungary weakened by World War I. As for centuries then a significant Romanian population was present in these territories, even more, in most of the regions the Romanians formed a majority, in the Peace Treaties closing World War I the entire territory was annexed to the Kingdom of Romania. The Romanian authorities dissolved more than a thousand Hungarian state-supported elementary schools. Hungarian education was then only available in church-supported or private institutions even though the new authorities raised various obstacles there as well. High-school graduation exams were only available in Romanian, the new language of the country, unfamiliar to the one and a half million Hungarians in the territory, thus the greater part of graduates had failed to take their graduation exams.

Following World War II for the sake of ethnic peace the communist regime had in the beginning made several allowances for Hungarian education in Romania. Even though Romanian communists had nationalized Hungarian high schools established two or three centuries earlier, in the beginning the language of education in these institutions was mostly Hungarian. It was even possible to study in Hungarian at university as they have partially restored the Cluj University dissolved in 1919 and they have created a University of Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences for the Hungarian community in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş. Thus the historical Hungarian educational system seemed to have been restored, between the limits of a communist régime, though.

Nevertheless beginning with the fifties, the communist leadership began to gradually reduce the Hungar-



ian educational system which by the eighties was next to nothing on all levels. The Hungarian university in Kolozsvár/Cluj was dissolved from one day to another, Hungarian academic entities being transferred under the competence of the Romanian university founded in Kolozsvár/Cluj in 1919.

The inventor of the first central telephone switchboard, Tivadar Puskás was Transylvanian Hungarian as well.

Educational policies now

After the fall of the communist régime the historical Hungarian school system was slow to recover as by that time entire generations appeared among the Romanian community educated in a spirit less than tolerant towards Hungarian culture and the use of Hungarian. The policy of the RMDSZ succeeded in regaining the Hungarian schools of old. The Kolozsvár/Cluj Hungarian University is not restored yet nevertheless the Romanian university has accepted parallel Hungarian faculties. Owing to a long and tedious political bargain the Hungarian community of almost one and a half million members benefits again from a varied and modern Hungarian educational system. Nevertheless the right of the Hungarian community in Romania to organize under the circumstances of cultural autonomy its own educational system based on the general Romanian laws on education is still not clarified.

TIVADAR MAGYARI

Deputy Secretary-General of the RMDSZ
Department for Education

The Hungarian Youth Council of Romania (MIÉRT) was established as a result of the institutionalization of the relationships between the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ, the first Romanian member of the EPP) and the Hungarian youth organizations in Romania.

Introduction of MIÉRT

Ever since its establishment, the MIÉRT has been committed to the process of democratization in Romania and the protection of human and minority rights in our country. Based on European center-right values, our policy pays an extra amount of attention to the special needs of our community in Romania.

Representing the interests of the Hungarian youth in Romania is a mutual aim and, as such, it can only be accomplished through conjugated efforts that need to be triggered by a cooperation duly grounded on a continuous and institutionalized connection. Therefore, the Hungarian Youth Conference in Romania came into being on the 9th of March, 2002.

Actively involved in the programs of the YEPP, as well as in the dissemination of the center-right values in Romania, the MIÉRT has been an associated member of YEPP since 2010.

Basic principles

• Openness

The MIÉRT not only supports new initiatives but it assists the self-structuring of the Hungarian youth *diaspora*, too.

• Professionalism

Professionalism is regarded by the MIÉRT as a top priority when it comes to tasks and obligations.

• Partnership

Cooperation and mutual support between the MIÉRT and the RMDSZ is a common aim. However, the MIÉRT and its member organizations have been proven as willing to make good use of their structures and institutions in order to influence the way youth interests are being represented in Romania.

• Duties

It encourages any initiatives meant to reveal the interests and demands of the Hungarian youth and its organizations in Romania (organization of forums, ordering of surveys and polls).

It offers a framework for discussions covering a great variety of problems by involving all the engaged political, public and civilian forums.

It plays an important role while representing the interests of the youth in its relationship with the RMDSZ; it prepares decisions; it participates in the consultation and reporting process on draft laws concerning the youth strategy of the RMDSZ.

Major events

• EU Tábor (EU Camp)

The *EU Tábor* is an EU thematic summer school and it is the largest professional and public summer event of the MIÉRT. Any ongoing public and professional topics of the EU and Romania are being tackled during this camp. Moreover, the young participants of the camp are given the opportunity to spend a couple of days in the mountains and enjoy the benefits of the hosting leisure centre. In 2012, the EU Camp has been organized in cooperation with the Kós Károly Academy (KKA), the Center for European Studies (CES) and the MIÉRT.

• Fél-sziget Fesztivál (Peninsula Festival)

The MIÉRT is co-organizer to the *Fél-sziget Fesztivál - Festivalul Peninsula*, the largest festival in Romania. The MIÉRT Tent is there to be active all through the festival, giving room to various public events, presentations and tournaments meant to the entertain the festival-goers.

• MIÉRT Akadémia (The MIÉRT Academy)

Already regarded as a "historical" event with the MIÉRT, the Academy focuses on professional issues that have any connection whatsoever with the Hungarian youth in Romania. This event involves a rather small circle of participants, as well as acknowledged guests from the professional and public life.

• Various conferences and trainings

The above events offer the opportunity to youth organization leaders to develop their skills, to exchange their experiences and increase the effectiveness of their activities.



Media Winner

Media Winner is a national talent contest organized by the RMDSZ and Transindex (Romanian Hungarian news portal). Its aim is to discover and promote young Transylvanian Hungarian talents of impressive skills with noteworthy artistic performances. By discovering and supporting these young people the program is meant to boost Transylvanian cultural events, to promote the talents in the region and to prove that the concept of stardom is not unfamiliar here.

By definition the Media Winner offers the possibility of public performance to young artists who otherwise could not get to perform on stage and to put their talents to contest. The renowned judges of the competition help contestants in developing their talents, in promoting their work and in building an artistic career. Several of the young talents presented on stage during Media Winner are by now famous on national or even international level.

The contest has reached its fourth edition in 2012 (the first three editions ranged from 2004 to 2006) and was a hit with performers and audiences both. Over 280 artists performed in the local, regional and national auditions of the contest viewed by a total audience of 3500 live and over 111 000 viewers online.



Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, the biggest city inhabited by a Hungarian majority in Romania is becoming an increasingly livable city. The youth studying in its famous colleges have more and more opportunities in their home town; therefore many young people choose to stay in their native city after graduating university. This is possible due to a dynamic and open local authority led by mayor **Árpád Antal** - that ensures opportunities to those who plan their future in Szeklerland.

Árpád Antal: Implementing Cohabitation Models for the Integrity of Each Citizen's Cultural and Linguistic Rights

You were elected mayor first in 2008, then again in 2012 with an overwhelming majority of the votes: you received two and a half times more votes than previously. What is the key of becoming a successful and valued mayor?

It is imperative for the elected official to take the job he was elected for, seriously. I believe that those who trusted me with their vote, wanted a more livable Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe. This is the job I took on and this is what I will work for in the upcoming term as well. I am fully convinced that in a blossoming and developing city the inhabitants need to be presented a positive concept of the city's future. Therefore we don't only build our town in a physical sense, but also in



a psychological one. We are forging a community where everyone is responsible for himself and for others. Above all, for this a family-friendly environment is consequential and we also need to pay special attention for developments to be environmentally safe, given the way environment friendly facilities are becoming increasingly important in a sustainable urban medium.

What fields Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe needs to develop in order to become a successful municipality?

All fields, starting from infrastructure to community building, given that modernising the infrastructure enhances people's comfort, while community building lays down the bases for a positive future-concept. These together can ensure a city to be pleasant and livable. But it is important to note that a municipality in East-Europe, in Romania, is far from being a self-governance in the true sense of the word, meaning it would literally 'self-govern' itself. Therefore it matters enormously what sort of relationship the leadership of the municipality has with the incumbent central government, given that Romania is a robustly centralized state. The fact that the RMDSZ has been a governing force in various intervals was very useful, since in the last decades Romanian governments in power treated Hungarian inhabited regions as second class settlements, due to their ethnic



component. Nowadays, when the RMDSZ is in opposition, it is easy to notice the economic boycott the Romanian government applies towards Szeklerland's settlements.

How do you see the situation of the Romanian municipalities and what sort of changes do you think should be implemented?

In the last 22 years we have experienced a duality in the attitude of the central government: they talk a lot about decentralization and about the importance of subsidiarity, however real decentralization is fully lacking from Romania. This can be explained in part by the fact that Romanian governments are reluctant to give wider competences to Hungarian inhabited regions. Now, the central government cannot solve people's everyday problems, it is too far away for that. Hence, I believe Romania needs to be decentralized, in such a way that it would be based on a partnership of municipalities, and before all: the process should not be the result of a political decision. If all the above are implemented, I am convinced that Romania becomes a far more efficient and competitive country in Europe.

You've mentioned the 'ethnic component' of the region. What does this mean more specifically, and what sort of challenges

does it represent for a mayor of an ethnically diverse city?

Our city and region is inhabited by an overwhelming ethnic Hungarian, Hungarian speaking majority, alongside a significant Romanian and Roma community. From this results that the leadership of the city needs to take into account the needs and expectations of all local ethnic groups; this is the only way to create a lasting sense of comfort for the people living here. Therefore cohabitation models ensuring cultural and linguistic rights for all citizens need to be implemented. Thus, the municipality pays special attention to bilingualism and to the cultures of the respective nationalities. Our city spends most on culture in entire Romania, so in a way we could say that from a cultural standpoint Szeklerland is among Europe's prominent regions.

What is that particular 'plus' that Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe can offer, in comparison to other cities in Romania?

It is safe to say that our city has a splendid location, in a spectacular environment, on the inner side of the Carpathian curb, in fact on the very border between Western and Eastern Christianity. Our region is one of the richest ones in mineral water in entire Central-Eastern Europe, with more than 3000 mineral water springs. Hence spa culture is very common in Szeklerland, a lot of people visit us due to our healing springs. As we are re-building our city, it becomes ever more

civilised and pretty, up to European standards. While busy and dynamic, it has kept its human scale and familiarity. Creating quality is a principle that we always take into account and we also pay attention to a fair balance of aesthetics and functionality when rehabilitating our city. This is what makes Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe a truly pleasant and livable place.

Is it more difficult for a mayor that is a member of the Hungarian minority to be successful in comparison to another that is a member of the Romanian majority?

It is not more difficult, it is far more difficult! (He laughs). Looking back to my school years, my parents and my teachers always told me that for a Hungarian it is twice as difficult to prevail in Romania, therefore we need to study and work twice as much. Yes, it is far more difficult to run a city as a Hungarian, no question about it, because the problems we encounter are far more complex. Very often state institutions are working against the municipality: for example we have countless problems concerning implementing bilingualism and we are also too often obstructed from using our national symbols freely. Under these circumstances I can honestly say, my job is not easy, but with faith, strength and tenacious work one can move mountains. We believe that our hard work will eventually result in our region becoming one of the most appealing ones in Europe.

The Family In Focus

The receding demographic tendencies revealed in the results of the 2011 Romanian census have called attention to the necessity of elaborating an efficient system that would offer families support. Consequently in December 2011 the RMDSZ has launched the family policy initiative entitled **Cooperation for a Hungarian Future**.

"Family Friendly Communities" is a series of programs announced on local level within the initiative combined with a program for the elaboration of a package of policies encouraging family life and the raising of children.

On May the 15th for the first time the RMDSZ awarded local governments who made efforts for constructing family friendly communities and offered best practices in the field of improving the living standards of families with several children and of developing programs for children and youth. In the same spirit, these authorities followed in the development of settlements the criteria of the "Family Friendly Communities" program and incorporated into their 2012 local budget the financing of young people ready to found a family and start having children and during the whole process they cooperated with NGOs, with youth and church organizations.



This year twenty local governments were given the title of Family Friendly Community. Among the awarded settlements the case of **Gyergyóremete/ Remetea** is outstanding as the local government here spent almost 2 million ROL (443.000 EUR) for family friendly programs during last year. The settlement has a tradition of family friendly programs and of cooperation with NGOs. The local authorities are financing services and programs that meet the needs of the community. Such programs are the family aid program, the medical care at home program, the local administrative service, programs for disabled children, food service program and after-school program. The local government pays attention to the quality of medical services and of the local system of education and it also offers support for big families.

Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe has allocated 200.000 RON (45.000 EUR) in its budget to family friendly programs available to NGOs as well. The local government pays great attention to the maintenance and development of kindergarten and school buildings, to the construction of new sports grounds and playing grounds. They have begun the construction of a day-nursery for 60 children. For a safer environment for mothers with baby carriages, when reconstructing the side-walks in the city, they were relieved of obstacles.

The **Council of Hargita/Harghita County** supports family friendly programs everywhere in the county. They have supported a series of Mother and child programs such as Baby Week, Childbirth Week, Training for Delivery, Labor-Coach (Doula) Training, Children's Day and Mothers' Week. The Council runs a Playground program for the establishment of modern, safe and environment-friendly playgrounds in cooperation with local governments. The Council supports village administration programs aimed at providing health- and social care services for persons living in isolated settlements of county Hargita/Harghita in cooperation with mayor's offices and civil organizations.

Further programs: health care and social care at home, cultural and historical tours as well as mountain walks in the Szekler region.

The local government of **Nagyszalonta/Salonta** runs a series of family friendly programs. Some of these are the education and training of local disabled youth, the operation of the St. Anthony Boarding School, the support of the local Union for Social and Health Care and of the local Social Canteen. The local government has lately inaugurated a new, modern and safe playground and it supports the organization of a sports camp and a handicraft club in the town.

Awarded local governments:
Gyergyóremete/Remetea,
Székelyudvarhely/
Odorheiu Secuiesc, the
Council of County Hargita/
Harghita, Sepsiszentgyörgy/
Sfântu Gheorghe, Vargyas/
Vârghis, Szászrégen/Reghin,
Nyárádszereda/Miercurea
Nirajului, Marossárpatak/Glodei,
Kraszna/Crasna, Szilágycseh/
Cehu Silvaniei, Sarmaság/
Șarmășag, Szilágyperecsén/
Pericei, Tordaszentlászló/
Săvădisla, Szatmárnémeti/Satu-
Mare, Kolcs/Culciu, Alsólugas/
Lugașu de Jos, Nagyszalonta/
Salonta, Biharfélegyháza/Roșiori,
Kisiratos/Dorobanți
and Zombolya/Jimbolia.



A mother of two children, a successful businesswoman, president to the Council of Representatives of the Alliance and vice-mayor for ten years of Nagyvárad/Oradea, one of the most important cities in Romania. For years in a row now **Rozália Biró** has been among the outstanding politicians of the RMDSZ and among the women who by their presence and work add color and value to the life of the Alliance.

Mom's Work is Important for the Community

You have been a member of the Bihar/Bihor county organization of the RMDSZ since 1991 but you have undertaken an active role in the Alliance in 1999. What arguments made you take such a step?

The fact that we have managed to construct a successful business from scrap with my partner gave me confidence and convinced me one needed to do things for the benefit of the community as well. Living as a minority requires it that several members of the community be prepared to do things for that community to grow and prosper. Such communities should always voice their special expectations. In regions where Hungarians live in majority groups, this voice is easily heard but in places where we are under 40-50% expectations need to be clearly formulated and consistently and deliberately pursued. My experience in Nagyvárad/Oradea and county Bihar/Bihor taught me this: active people are very much needed. Last but not least one is inclined to think differently after having started a family and having had children. In such situations one focuses not only on one's own present and future but on his or her children's present and future as well. Our only option for a decent future here in Romania is to feel at home on our native land and to be able to be accomplished and lead a satisfactory life as Hungarians. For that we need to secure certain conditions and frames.

Is it a challenge for women to be in politics?

For a woman to be successful in politics, she needs to work a lot, she needs a great team and she also needs energy, good spirit and perseverance. I had a great team to support me while the expectations of the community have designed my lot of work. From the very beginning it was my aim to succeed, to give my utmost to the community. Concerning perseverance I can only say I am extremely bad at giving up. Let us also mention self-confidence: it plays a significant role for any woman who wishes to build a successful career in politics. When it comes to being confident, us, women are perhaps a

bit disabled by which I do not wish to imply we have no self-confidence but to say that our self-confidence is of a different kind when compared to that of men. In exchange, we do boast a series of qualities, skills and abilities to benefit from better than our gentleman colleagues could. And here I am thinking of our ability to make compromises for instance. When you enter politics in Romania as a Hungarian, efficient representation is a result of political debates, dialogue and yes, compromise. This is where women are needed. Women can simultaneously read more signals such as details and non-verbal feed-back and this can be of enormous help during negotiation. Their more empathic nature also creates good opportunities for ladies. I think our psychological assets make it quite possible for us to play a successful role as politicians.

You are president to the Council of Representatives of the Alliance, the highest decision-making body in the Alliance between two Congresses. Is your position stimulating for your lady colleagues at the start of their career?

The fact that I am president to the CRA shows that it is possible for women to reach a high status within





the Alliance. The Alliance is actually famous for its teamwork. If we are prepared to consistently work as members of a team, we can reach surprisingly high offices. As I see it, there are more than a few ambitious and erudite young ladies among our colleagues at the Alliance. This is of utmost importance as the women's platforms and organizations of the Alliance are far from well organized if compared to the situation of women in other Romanian parties but the representation is still powerful. As I have mentioned it, the Alliance is rather focused on teamwork. I consider this is an advantage to us, as contributions from politician men and women add up to a whole. My young lady colleagues are quite interested to discover the know-how behind a political career. Well, this know-how consists of, as I said, work, perseverance, energy and

For a woman to be successful in politics, she needs to work a lot, she needs a great team and she also needs energy, good spirit and perseverance.

confidence. My office held in the Alliance might encourage young women to undertake a political career before or after having founded a family. But in order to do this one also needs support from that family. In our times of economic and social crisis the political activity of socially sensitive women is extremely welcome.

How can you harmonize family life and a career in politics? What is Biró Rozália, the mother like?

One can marry a career in politics with family life but in order to do that one needs the support of one's partner and children. My son Barni is twelve, my daughter Bernadett is nine and a half years old. I have entered politics twelve years ago after I gave birth to my son. Without the partner I have found in my husband who sometimes even acted as a mother to our children I couldn't have reached the position I am in today. The same is valid for my children who have always stood up for me. Such a life-style generates a great amount of tension and this has to be compensated for with precious but short quality time spent together. Concerning the kind of mother I am I think my daughter characterized me quite well in one of her second-grade compositions: my mother is beautiful, my mother is sometimes tired, my mother gives me a hug and reads me a story when she comes home and she consoles me if I cry. I think their image of me is more realistic than anything I could say. I am a rather exigent mom. As I have experienced it, life consists of a series of difficulties and only those trained from early childhood to work hard, be consistent and have an open mind can deal with it. My image as part of a family also depends on the way my husband has formed it. I couldn't count the times he quieted our crying, indignant children down while I was away. He told them mom's work was important for the community, he told them mom was expected to go and meet people and talk to them. I think this completes the image of Biró Rozália, the mother.

“Károly Kós Academy” Foundation – An Institution for Scientific Training and Research

The “Károly Kós Academy” Foundation (KKA) is the institute for scientific research of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) established in February 2010. The aim of the Hungarian institution founded two years ago in Romania is to serve as a political and ideological forum in Transylvania and the region and to offer space for dialogue, ideological debate and for the presentation of political programs. Its activity is related to the concepts of nation and national identity, to the position of these concepts in this region and in the European Union, to the dilemmas of minority life and to the challenges of Romania’s European integration. Furthermore, the KKA intends to play a decisive role in the training of young politicians and in providing for the supply of Hungarian politicians in Romania.

The Structure of the Foundation

The founders of the “Károly Kós Academy” Foundation are: senator **Béla Markó**, former president of the RMDSZ, president of the “Károly Kós Academy” Foundation, **Csaba Takács**, president of the Board of the Communitas Foundation and **Hunor Kelemen**, president of the RMDSZ.

Further members of the Board of Directors are **Péter Kovács**, Secretary General to the RMDSZ, managing director of the “Károly Kós Academy” Foundation and **dr. Attila Szász**, mandatory editor in chief of the Hungarian Broadcast of Radio Tg. Mureş.

The Board relies on the Academic Council gathering Transylvanian professors, researchers and experts. Members of the Academic Council:

- dr. György Gaál**, high school and university teacher, field of research: Hungarian literature, culture and civilization in Transylvania;
- Csilla Hegedüs**, Vice Secretary General for Culture of the RMDSZ, director of the Transylvania Trust Foundation;
- dr. István Horváth**, president of the National Institute for Research on Minorities;
- dr. Jácint Juhász**, vice-dean of the Faculty of Economy of the Kolozsvár/Cluj Babes-Bolyai University;
- dr. Magor Kádár**, lecturer at the Political Science, Public Administration and Communication Faculty of the Kolozsvár/Cluj Babes-Bolyai University;

dr. Lajos Kántor, literary historian, editor in chief of the *Korunk* cultural review;

dr. Attila Varga, MP, senior lecturer at the Political Science, Public Administration and Communication Faculty of the Kolozsvár/Cluj Babes-Bolyai University;

István Székely, Vice Secretary General for Social Organization of the RMDSZ, politologue;

dr. Márton Tonk, dean of the Kolozsvár/Cluj Faculty of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania;

dr. Anna Kós, dean of the Marosvásárhely/Tg. Mureş University of Arts;

dr. András Béres, philosopher, aesthete, lecturer at the Marosvásárhely/Tg. Mureş University of Arts;

dr. Attila Gáspárik CEO of the Marosvásárhely/Tg. Mureş National Theatre, associate professor at the Marosvásárhely/Tg. Mureş University of Arts;

András Ferenc Kovács, writer, translator, editor in chief of the *Látó* literary review;

dr. Tivadar Magyar, Vice Secretary General for Education of the RMDSZ, vice dean of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of the Kolozsvár/Cluj Babes-Bolyai University.

The Objective of the Foundation

The general objectives of the Kós Károly Academy Foundation are the following: to support the modernization process of the centre-right, to consolidate and



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develop the Romanian democracy, to protect the rights of the national minorities and to organize activities that target the development of human resources and education more efficiently. Other specific objectives range from elaborating and coordinating programs concerning scientific research and education, supporting activities regarding the protection, preservation and development of the national minorities' identity in Romania, as well as elaborating and applying strategies that regulate the protection of the national minorities' individual and collective rights and providing scholarships and training courses.

Activities, Events

Centre for European Studies - CES Membership

Beside political presence, the representation of Hungarian interests in Romania is both professionally and scientifically integrated into the activity of the greater European political party-group. In May 2012 the Centre for European Studies - CES seated in Brussels and acting as a research institute for the European People's Party has accepted the membership of the KKA.

EU Camp

In the spirit of its educational profile, the academy has for three times provided expertise for the EU youth camp organized by the Hungarian Youth Conference (MIÉRT) and the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania.

Constructing Transylvania - Training for Community Leaders

With support from the RMD SZ and the Hungarian Youth Conference, the Károly Kós Academy has organized a training session of 18 months in various regions in Transylvania. The training offers courses on community leadership, on campaigning, on campaign management and on communication for local government candidates. The training is designed to produce a young elite group of 50-60 individuals harmoniously cooperating in Transylvania, a group that would assume a determining role in establishing a future image and mission for the community, a group that would, through its activity, contribute to a more efficient representation of the Hungarian community in Romania and would organize the public life of this community on an expert level.

The Establishment of the Hungarian Center for Media, Culture and Science in Kolozsvár/Cluj

The Hungarian Center for Media, Culture and Science opened on the 13th of October 2011 in Kolozsvár/Cluj. The Center hosts scientific, cultural and media programs organized by the Minerva Cultural Association and by the KKA.



The Kolozsvár/Cluj Bookfest

In June 2012 the Union of Hungarian Publishing Houses, the General Secretariat of the RMDSZ and the Hungarian Book Guild in Romania organized the second edition of Kolozsvár/Cluj Bookfest. The Károly Kós Academy contributed to the organization of the greatest Transylvanian event centered on Hungarian writers, poets and books.

Media cooperation, book presentations

With the title *Károly Kós Academy* and in partnership with the Transylvanian Hungarian Television the Foundation has initiated a series of dialogues between experts and scientists dealing with various issues concerning the Hungarian community in Romania. These are conference-like debates acted out in front of an audience, recorded and broadcasted by the Transylvanian Hungarian Television (ETV).

In 2011 the Károly Kós Academy became the owner of the intellectual product *Erdélyi Riport* (Transylvanian Reportage) and assigned the company *Riport Kiadó* with the publishing of the review. The review *Erdélyi Riport* is now a weekly publication.

The KKA has organized successful book presentations in various settlements in Romania. A few titles: Gusztáv Láng *Dsida Jenő összegyűjtött versei (Collected Poems by Jenő Dsida)*, *Könyv, grafika, könyvművészet Erdélyben (1919-2011) (Book, Graphic Art and Tipography in Transylvania 1919-2011)*, Lajos Kántor: *Konglomerát (Erdély) (Conglomerate. Transylvania)* and the literary evening by Béla Markó *Térfoglalástól visszabontásig (From Settling In to Demolition)*.

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Our Aim: a Strong Hungarian Community in Transylvania

Beside politically representing the Hungarian community in Romania, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) contributes to organizing the social life of the community. The Alliance supports Transylvanian Hungarian non-governmental organizations aimed at preserving the traditions of the community, cultural and scientific organizations and organizations working in the field of interethnic relations. It also supports Hungarian printed and electronic media, the publishing business, especially the publishing of contemporary authors. It finances artistic institutions, theatres and opera houses, youth, recreational and sports events and the cultivation of talents. It offers scholarships to young professional artists.

The RMDSZ is the only formation in Romanian political life to distribute part of its own budget through calls for projects.

Since 2003 the Alliance has allocated significant sums of money to publishing books in Hungarian, to organizing youth and sports events and scientific sessions or trainings, it has contributed to the financing of conference trips abroad by young professionals, it has supported the functioning of cultural centers for small Hungarian communities and of educational centers in such communities, it has offered scholarships to writers, artists, musicians and filmmakers.

The RMDSZ has delegated the management of projects to the Communitas Foundation and its eight special bodies: the Board for Youth, the Publishing Board, the Cultural Board, the Scholarship Board, the Media Board, the Sports Board, the Board for Diaspora Communities, the Travel Support Board. The board members are Hungarian Romanian professional artists, writers, poets, academic teachers and renowned personalities of cultural and scientific life. The president of the Advisory Board of the Communitas Foundation is Csaba Takács.

Did you know that...?

- we have supported the publishing of **920** books
- we have contributed to the functioning of **107** Hungarian Houses (cultural centers)

- we have offered travel support for **1091** priests in small Hungarian communities
- we have supported the **699** conference travels of **323** persons
- we have financed **3339** NGOs, such as the Hungarian Opera House in Kolozsvár/Cluj, the Hungarian Theatre in Kolozsvár/Cluj, the Szekler Museum of Csík/Ciuc, the Déva/Deva St. Francisc Foundation, the Maltese Charity Service, the Sapientia Foundation, the Zoltán Kallós Foundation
- we have supported the organization of **9344** programs such as the ALTER-NATIVE International Short Film Festival, the deCAMERon International Chamber Music Festival, the Csík/Ciuc International MiniJazz Festival, the Harmonia Cordis International Classic Guitar Festival, the FILM.DOK Hungarian-Romanian Documentary Film Festival, the Saint Stephen's-day International Folk Dance Meeting, the Castle Days in Bonchida/Bonțida.
- during the last decade we have awarded **300** scholarships for young artists.



Laczkó Vass Róbert



“We Can Play Evanescence Back!”

An actor at the Hungarian Theatre of Kolozsvár/Cluj, an occasional opera singer, he publishes verse and articles. The items may go on, the essence is this: **Róbert Laczkó Vass** finishes everything he starts with equal passion, talent and admirable bearing. The artist born in 1976 at Gyergyóremete/Remetea was twice awarded the Grant for Creation by the Communitas Foundation: individually in 2010, and as member of the Kalapos Band in 2011.

Imola T. Koós

Actor, singer, poet, publicist, photographer: Róbert Laczkó Vass. Have I forgotten anything?

Too many tags, but still: I also am a cult-tourist and a practicing godfather. My "godson", Patience Anditi, lives in a small Kenyan village on the isle of Rusinga. I support the costs of his education within the limits of my possibilities. I would really like to visit and get to know him. He is my only godson. I only have "de facto" goddaughters here.

Could one classify your avatars?

Their rank always depends on the tasks, possibilities and chances of the moment but the stage is my true love.

According to your CV you were trained as an elementary school teacher, you have even practiced this profession for a year. I wonder what kind of an elementary school teacher Róbert Laczkó Vass was...

A rebellious one. I tried to widen the educational limits obligatory then, the limits I grew out of on A level. I started out with a class of shy and innocent kids. Then all sorts of strange things happened to them. We held our nature classes outside, in the open. At Christmas we went singing from door to door in several blocks of flats. We organized reciting contests for elementary-school children. Along with a few friends we wrote a children's musical for the kids to play in. We visited the mines. We studied much more than the syllabus required - especially reading, writing and counting. And still not enough, considering the reading and writing problems of pupils in higher grades today. But surprisingly enough those kids were happier with the difficult task than their worrying parents. I was far from being an accomplished pedagogue nevertheless I still keep track of many of my pupils. A girl has

even become an elementary school teacher because of me. This makes me extremely proud.

There is practically no children's play in Kolozsvár/Cluj without you. (He has key roles in all the plays for children on the stage of the Hungarian Theatre of Kolozsvár/Cluj.) One can tell by watching you act that you understand children extremely well. Does this come from your teaching experience or is it something one is born with?

I think it is more related to the pleasure of it. And this is valid for all the plays for children, no matter how didactic they might be. These need to be performed on stage. They do not only teach, they also educate and entertain. Because these children are our future audiences for plays by Chekhov, Beckett or Ionesco. Children are the most grateful and sincere audience among all audiences in theatre. When dramatic moments come by, the atmosphere is almost sacral. They also are a quite refined audience: if we play by the rule, they would only accept authentic performances. While to perform is a healthy joy, it is like a second childhood in a paradise lost. The best way to lose weight on stage!

You are among the few artists who act as a living bridge between the Hungarian Theatre and the Hungarian Opera House in Kolozsvár/Cluj. The two institutions share not only the building but the same stage as well. They do not, nevertheless, share their crew. Yet, you perform with both. One night, you play in Büchner's *Leonce and Lena*, next evening you are a singer in the musical-opera *Erzsébet Báthory*. How does it feel?

It feels perfectly normal, even though I do get a headache from

time to time when rehearsals collide. It is a nuisance to explain things over which I have little control. At the time of my debut at the Hungarian Opera House in Kolozsvár/Cluj I was rehearsing in Budapest during the day, traveling all night, singing in Kolozsvár/Cluj the next day, traveling back at night, rehearsing in Budapest the next day and so on and so forth. This is a life-style: you either cope with it or you don't. Madame Déry sang everywhere in the Carpathian Basin, traveling with a cart while having pulmonary disease and another famous Hungarian actor of the nineteenth century, Megyeri, spent his entire wages and even sold his yellow coat to buy ink. The situation hasn't changed much: this profession requires sacrifices. I have no private life for weeks, for instance. Or I forget to eat, days in a row. Nevertheless the things I get in exchange make me happy and this is a rare gift nowadays. You have mentioned Büchner's *Leonce and Lena*. Gábor Tompa, the director, has clad the players in baroque costumes and has arranged them to play in the corner of a dusty industrial hall. We are talking about a wonderful, rare, philosophical play bearing a message well ahead of its time and seasoned with a fine sense of humor. The text is a mixture of translations from the original by László Lator and Gábor Thurzó, thus the language of the play is special in itself. These exquisite phrases have nevertheless certain implications that can only ring to my own ears during the stage performance. A few years ago I have sang Valerio in the János Vajda opera-version of the play, we have even recorded it earlier this year. It is no wonder I see the sheet music section for each word in my mind's eye and need to concentrate not to sing behind the scene. What else could this be, but a gift?

And you even get to sing in a band: the Kalapos Band is quite loved by its audience.

A few talented, openhearted kids got together in a band, they wrote an entire repertoire of songs based on classical Hungarian literary texts. There was no way for me, fifteen years their senior and mad about poetry to say no when they have asked me to become the voice of the band for a period of time. And we have worked together with excellent results. Then they graduated, went to university and the band got scattered a bit. They have unfortunately grown up, I could say, if this were not in the order of things. We are together and apart, at the same time. I am not convinced they have to go on with my voice, but with one of them we will continue to work together, no matter what the future might bring. But this is our secret for now.

I presume there have been ups and downs for you on this path...

Almost every artist has got his or her own rollercoaster. This is a rather whimsical profession, with great differences among those who engage on it. Creation always depends on individual freedom and still one needs a few handholds, shelters, directions on the way. We need to learn to relate to a certain system of values in order not to get lost while being free. We are more or less self-made people but this process may take place within extreme conditions nowadays. Our almost European society is not exactly a beacon of equal chances and this is as much valid for the art world as it is for the rest. People at the beginning of their carrier also have to face severe existential problems. In such situations grants are a huge help, as it is the grant for creation offered to young artists by the Communitas Foundation in Transylvania. This is a possibility that also bears a responsibility in

taking the artistic life-style to a new level.

You travel a lot and this produces a series of fine photographs. Your photographic work has been several times exhibited. How do you select your subject matter with the camera in hand?

I always follow my eyes. I am of course aware that everyone does the same, nevertheless by certain means we can play evanescence back. I bring my experiences home for us to share. While traveling, I am one with my camera-obscura, my friends keep teasing me about me watching the world through the camera all the time. I am not an easy travel companion. But then they borrow my photographs to show them to everyone. So I only make their job easier by exhibiting these photographs from time to time.

The performance Richard III staged by Gábor Tompa took you to South Corea while with Leonce and Lena you traveled to Bogota. How does such a trip to another continent feel? Does the actor get to go sightseeing, take photos, record memories? And what about audiences? Are they different from Hungarian or Romanian audiences?

Let us begin by saying that even though these trips are history I still cannot believe I have reached as far as the Far-East or Southern America. Such trips have so many implications that by the time you disentangle them all, you have for weeks already been back home. Even though these worlds are populated by everyday people as well, they are so very different from our own. Life feeds on completely different cultures there. We might share the Christian Easter experience as we did in Bogota or we might have the same brand of cell-phones as people in Seoul, we can still but wonder at their life-



style and thinking. In both places we were amazed at how open audiences were. The universal character of the theatre and its primary force beyond linguistic barriers stroke us as a surprise behind the scenes!

Would you share some of your projects in progress now?

The season has barely begun. I have survived a theatre and an opera premiere, the recordings of two main roles in two contemporary operas and I am still waiting for my lion's share. It is always good to relax, but I have got notes to write, photographs to process and exhibit, I have plans for a solo performance and as I have just said, the season has barely begun.

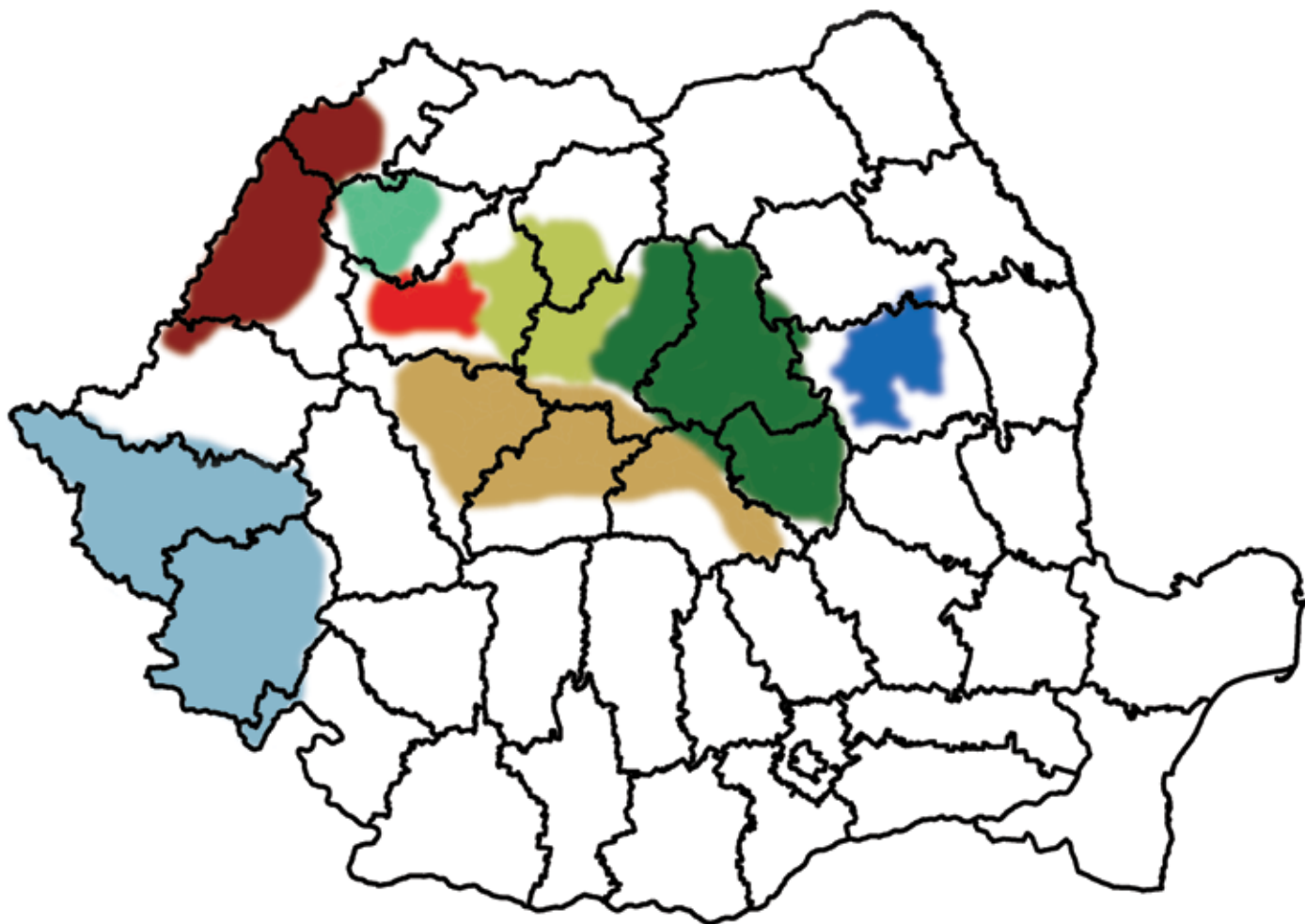
Your poetry displays your melancholy side - or am I wrong? Have you written poems lately?








Yes, I have and the face behind my lines is also mine. But these are rather pursuits among the lines than verses.

Last question. Don't think too much about the answer. Which is the most beautiful Hungarian word?

"Ölelés." (Hug.)





-  Bánság/Banat
-  Szilágyság/Sălaj
-  Bihar/Bihor
-  Mezőség/Câmpia Transilvaniei
-  Csángó Hungarians in Moldavia/Ceangăi
-  Southern Transylvania
-  Kalotaszeg/Călata
-  Székelyföld/Szeklerland

This is a brief presentation of the social and spiritual heritage of the Hungarian community in Transylvania classified according to ethnographical regions of this area.

Transylvanian Regions

Colorful Communities

Bánság/Banat

Bánság is an area defined by the rivers Maros/Mureş, Tisza/Tisa, Danube and the western portion of the Southern Carpathians. The northern and eastern parts of this region are Romanian territories. The Hungarian population here was decimated during the Ottoman occupation. From the 18th century onward the region was a site of orchestrated settling and spontaneous migration. By the 20th century a multicultural community of various ethnic groups was formed here (*Germans, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Croatians, Italians*).

Szilágyság/Sălaj

The culture of the Hungarians living in this region is a go-between of traditional Transylvanian and Hungarian (Lowlands) culture. The region is defined by the rivers Berettyó/Barcău, Kraszna/Crasna, Zilah/Sălaj and Szamos/Someş. The region boasts a series of sacral monuments. Cultural and denominational diversity has determined the culture of Hungarians living here. The traditional Hungarian folk music of the region reflects the pentatonic character of old Transylvanian folk music. The region is also famous for its rich collection of legends.

Bihar/Bihor

The greater, mountainous area of the region belongs to Romania, the lowlands to Hungary. It is a

geographically and ethnographically varied area. Its Hungarian and basically Calvinist population was completed after the 18th century Hungarian fights for freedom (Kuruc wars) by Slovak, German and Ukrainian settlers. The culture of the region has preserved several archaic features.

Mezőség/Câmpia Transilvaniei

This is the hillside region defined by the cities Kolozsvár/Cluj, Szamosújvár/Gherla, Dézs/Dej, Beszterce/Bistriţa, Szászrégen/

Reghin, Ludas/Luduş and Torda/Turda. The region devastated by 17th century wars was repopulated by Romanian settlers. One of its most popular settlements is Szék/Sic a former salt-mining center. The Hungarians in this region have preserved their traditional costume based on elements of bourgeois and noble attires and an amazingly rich textile art late into the 20th century. Its archaic folk music and dances reached world fame owing to the Hungarian folk dance movement in the 1970s.



Csángó Hungarians in Moldavia/Ceangăi

The ancestors of the Csángó community in Moldavia were a group of Hungarians settled there in order to guard and control the eastern borders of the Medieval Hungarian kingdom. This group has preserved an extremely rich archaic culture consisting of costume, pottery, poetry, music and legends. The nineteenth century modernization of the Hungarian language has not reached this region this is why the Csángó community speaks an archaic version of Hungarian. They have incorporated archaic elements into their Catholic religion such as the belief that the Holy Ghost would appear in the rising sun on Whit Sunday.

Southern Transylvania

This is the region around river Aranyos/Arieş, once populated by Szekler settlers. It is among the most bourgeois areas in Transylvania. Colorful spots of the region are Torockó/Rimetea and Torockószentgyörgy/Colteşti. The structure and architecture of Torockó/Rimetea displays the characteristic style of Transylvanian Saxon villages. The folk costume of this settlement is exquisitely rich and close to traditional bourgeois and aristocratic costumes. The Hungarians living around Brassó/Braşov converted to Lutheran belief in the 16th century and have a culture that shows strong German/Saxon influence.

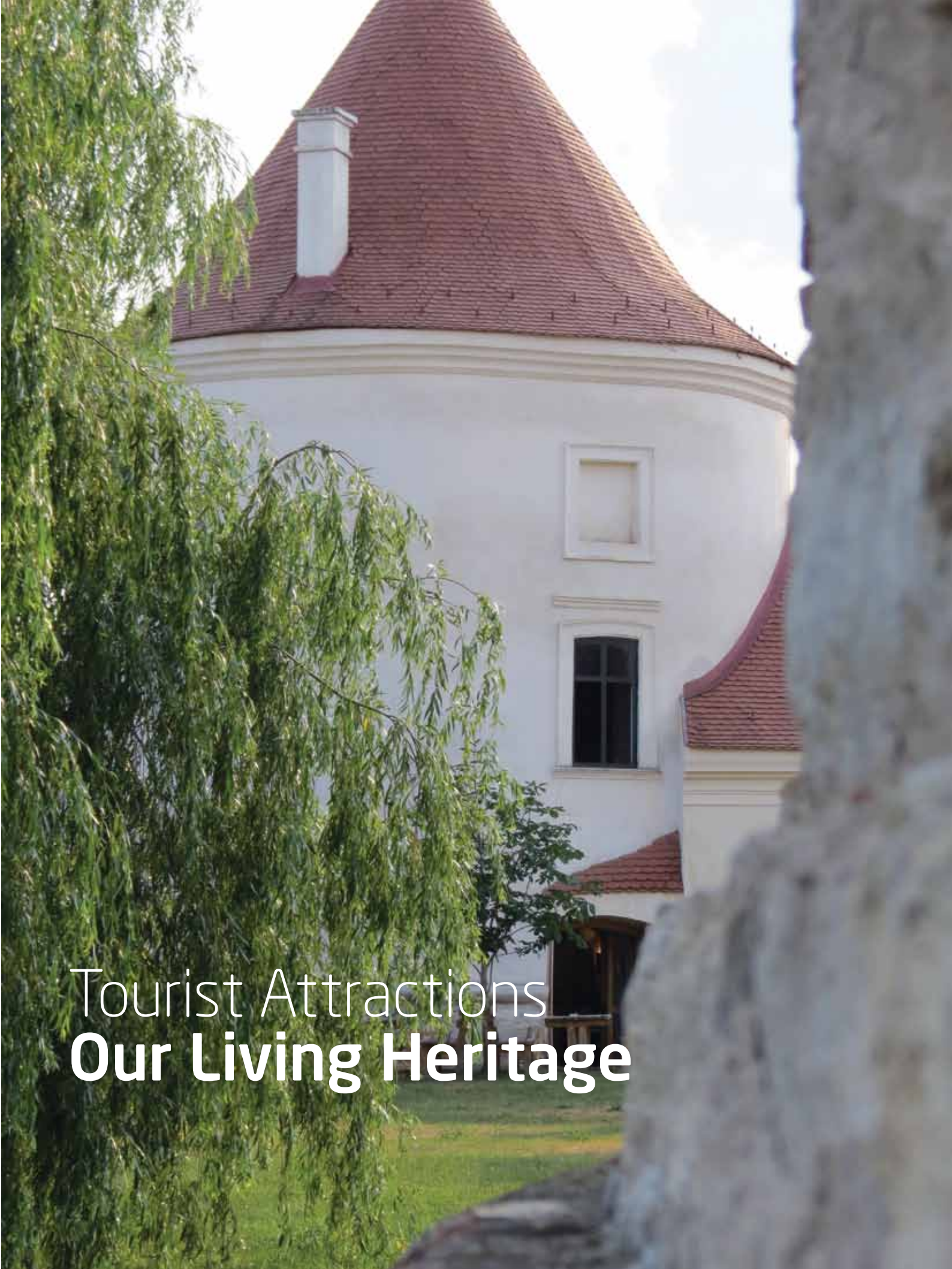
Kalotaszeg/Călata

Kalotaszeg lies between Kolozsvár/Cluj and Bánffyhunяд/Hunedoara and is partly populated by protestant Hungarians. Its medieval churches have specific painted, boarded ceilings and the region is famous for its fine woodcarving and painting culture. The custom of the "clean room" furnished with painted furniture and rich embroideries for yet unmarried girls is still alive. The region preserves one of the most beautiful versions of men's dance in Transylvanian folk dance.

Székelyföld/Szeklerland

Szeklerland is a region still populated by a majority of Hungarians settled by Hungarian kings on the western slopes of the Eastern Carpathians. The region is still divided according to its traditional administrative structure and is bearing the archaic names. The Szeklers lived on stock-raising, forestry and hunting. The region is famous for its specific wooden, carved gates, painted furniture and glazed tile fireplaces. The region is rich in archaic folk costumes tailored from home manufactured woolen, hemp and linen canvas.





Tourist Attractions
Our Living Heritage

The Bánffy Castle of Bonchida/Bonțida



After leaving the Kolozsvár/Cluj-N.-Dézs/Dej highway at Válaszút/Răscruți, one can soon observe the rising towers of the Bánffy Castle at Bonchida/Bonțida, on the banks of the Somes River. Formerly known as the Transylvanian Versailles, Bánffy castle, Bonchida/Bonțida is one of the most beautiful historic buildings in the Carpathian basin. The mighty ruins remind the visitor of the aristocratic residence permanently inhabited from the 17th century to the Second World War. The Castle was built by and was in the ownership of the Bánffy family for centuries, several generations of this politically important Transylvanian family have been living in these buildings.

The ensemble damaged by the retreating German groups of the II World War after nationalization and due to the inadequate use of the buildings as well as to the lack of maintenance entered a process of fast degradation. Its precarious condition was officially recognised as it is now on the World Monuments Watch's list of One Hundred Most Endangered Sites for 2000. The size, architectural and historic value and degree of degradation of the castle make its restoration and use a complex task, which can be only realized with proper long-term strategy and through international co-operation. One of this strategy's results is by now

the establishment of the Built Heritage Conservation Training Centre in the Miklós building of the castle in 2004, a centre that thanks to its objectives and results was awarded with the main prize for Education, Training, and Awareness Raising" by Europa Nostra and the European Commission in 2008.

Since the beginning of the restoration works, the castle has been visited by many important personalities, such as His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, members of the Romanian Royal Family, the President of Hungary, ambassadors, as well as personalities of public life from Romania and abroad.

Many activities are hosted at the castle during the year, including children programmes, carnivals and open days, as well as cultural days focusing on the castle itself, a wide range of film festivals, conferences and meetings related to the protection of the cultural and built heritage, activities that transform this heritage in a living castle.

References:

Text: <http://transylvaniatrust.ro/>; Transylvania Trust: "The Bánffy Castle of Bonțida - Past, Present, Future", Gloria Publisher, Cluj 2009

Pictures: Transylvania Trust (Boglárka BOHONYI), Horatiu Vasilescu



The Corvin Castle of Vajdahunyad/Hunedoara

Today, a large number of tourists from all over the world are visiting the municipality of Vajdahunyad/Hunedoara in Hunyad/Hunedoara County, to see the magnificent Corvin Castle a former fortification that was one of the biggest and most famous properties of Hunyadi János/ Ioan of Hunedoara.

This edifice that had been added to and modified throughout the centuries was initially built in the 15th century by Ioan of Hunedoara in the place of an old fortification, on a rock around which flows the Zlaști brook. It is an imposing building, with towers, bastions and a dungeon. The uniqueness of this ensemble is represented by its high level military architecture, typical of 15th century South Eastern Europe, incorporating the most advanced elements of civil architecture as well. The building body called the Big Palace, a French-inspired construction, was unique in the region administrated by the Hungarian Kingdom in that period. Other elements that make the castle of Hunedoara special are the interventions made after the 15th century, offering the visitor an excellent mixture of architectural elements of Renaissance, Baroque and Neo-gothic styles.

The castle was restored and converted into a museum, which offers furniture exhibitions in Gothic, Renaissance, and Eclectic style, and draws attention to the decorative features of the castle, such as coats of arms of various related families and personalities, frameworks, keystones of arches with floral elements and geometrical compositions, frescos and inscriptions.

In addition to the beautiful tangible heritage of the ensemble the myths and legends surrounding the family and the buildings also move the imagination of visitors.

References:

Text: <http://www.castelulcorvinilor.ro/>, <http://kastelyerdelyben.ro>



The Vernacular Architectural Ensemble of **Torockó/Rimetea**

The cultural value and natural beauty of Torockó/Rimetea establish the town as an outstanding place among the settlements of Transylvania. The village is located in one of the narrow valleys that are parallel with the course of the Aranyos/Aries river. To the south, the stark crags of the 1128m high Colții Trascăului (Piatra Secuiului, Szekler Rock) form a backdrop to the settlement.

The development of iron mining and manufacture determined the history of the valley beginning from the 14th century, when German miners were settled here, till the beginning of the 20th century, when the quick development and urbanization of the village generated by the well marketed iron products produced in Torockó/Rimetea unfortunately stopped. Today there live less than 600 inhabitants here.

Over the last ten years the Rimetea Heritage Conservation Project has encouraged the pro-active conservation of the area's architectural heritage, a project awarded with Europa Nostra Medal in 1999, the highest European award at that time.

Torockó/Rimetea's unified appearance and its celebrated high status 19th century architecture contributes significantly to the area's character. The white buildings are significant parts of Torockó/Rimetea's architectural heritage. The first of these Classicist bourgeois houses was constructed in the 1820's, but we can find Eclectic bourgeois houses and a large number of early and late peasant houses as well, many of them still containing traditional furniture. On the large list of attractions are the Upper and Lower Market Row with its houses formerly owned by iron traders and blacksmiths, the Ethnographical Museum, the Unitarian Church, the Fire Station, the Large and Little Pool, the Miners street, the cemetery with its oldest gravestone from 1705, but visitors can "hunt" for further treasures, such as a snake form door handle as well in this unique place.

References:

Text: <http://transylvaniatrust.ro/>; Transylvania Trust: "Rimetea - Tourist Map", IDEA DESIGN&PRINT, Cluj, 2011

Pictures: Transylvania Trust (Árpád FURU)



The Bethlen Castle of Keresd/Criș



If we leave at Daneș the country road connecting Segesvár/Sighișoara and Medgyes/Mediaș, and we go southward, then, after driving on a road winding among hillsides, we arrive to Keresd/Criș. Keresd/Criș is known as the property of a certain branch of the Bethlen family - subsequently known as the branch of Keresd/Criș.

Regarded as the most beautiful piece of Transylvanian Renaissance dwelling and defence castle architecture, the castle in Keresd/Criș is a monument providing an outstanding value to the Romanian architectural heritage. The castle was built in several phases between the 14-16th century, but it was strengthened with high bastions only in the 17th century. The buildings of the ensemble are marked by the culture, style and taste of the Bethlen aristocrats. In addition to comfort and safety, they gave high importance to the decoration of the buildings. Spaces, such as the "Golden Palace", the „Day Bastion-Tower” or the "Golden Room" have been richly ornamented with coats of arms, „rainbow"-vaulted ceilings, paintings, inscriptions, portraits of family members and tapestries. The authentic furniture of the rooms was painted and polished with great expertise.

The castle had been dwelt until the day of nationalization that occurred on 3rd of March 1948. Nationalization, human malevolence, and the theft of the construction and building materials have all ruined and destroyed this outstandingly beautiful monument of the Transylvanian Renaissance.

In June 2007, after many years of legal suits, the Transylvanian branch of the Bethlen family was officially given back the castle and the park - the entire estate being in a deplorable condition. Today, this noble edifice is slowly but steadily reborn from its ashes.

References:

Text: <http://bethlen.ro>, <http://kastelyerdelyben.ro>

Pictures: Office of design and consultancy in the restoration of historic buildings IROD M, Cluj, Zsolt KOVÁCS & Attila WEISZ art historians, Transylvania Trust (Erika HARANTH)

The Mikó Castle

The oldest building in Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc is the Mikó Castle. It was built by one of Prince Gábor Bethlen's finest diplomats, Ferenc Hídvégi Mikó, an outstanding personality of 17th century Transylvanian political life. He started building the castle on April the 26th 1623 and finished it around the thirties of the seventeenth century.

The building was ruined by a 1661 Turkish-Tartar attack and it was restored at instructions from Austrian general Stephan Steinville in 1714-1716 as it reads on the stone tablet placed above the gate.

The reinforced castle served as component of the eastern line of defense of the Habsburg Empire. Before the 1764 establishment of the Szekler border guard, the

castle was a garrison for imperial troupes. From 1764 to 1849 the building was used as headquarters of the first Szekler regiment.

With short exceptions, the castle was a military site until the mid-twentieth century. In 1970, after an extended process of restoration, the building became host to the Csíki Székely Múzeum/Szekler Museum of Ciuc founded in 1930. This is the biggest museum collection in county Hargita/Harghita, supported by the local government. It has a valuable collection of antique books: the several thousand pieces antique book collection of the Franciscan Monastery in Csíksomlyó/Șumuleu Ciuc with 120 incunabula.

Further information: www.csikimuzeum.ro



Visiting Brassó/ Braşov County

Black Church

The German Evangelical Black Church in Brassó/Braşov is the biggest church building in Romania, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture at the Eastern periphery of Europe. It is situated in the so-called *Honterus-Court* west of the main square.

The church originally consecrated to Virgin Mary was built in the period 1385-1477 in late Gothic style. In 1689 when the locals were against the establishment of imperial guards, the Habsburgs set the city on fire and the smoke blackened the church and gave it its name.

The neo-Gothic altar was made in 1866. The painted pulpit displays Moses with the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments.

On the opposite walls one can see the crest of the City of Brassó/Braşov and of King Mathias.

The 4000 pipes Buchholz organ of the church was made in mid-nineteenth century.

The church boasts a rich collection of liturgical vestments and Anatolian carpets.



The Fogaras/Făgăraş Castle

The main attraction of the city is a castle with four corner battlements surrounded by a wall and ditch, situated in the main square, originally built of wood around 1310 and transformed into a stone structure during the 16th century. The castle was the property of the wives of Transylvanian princes. Zsuzsanna Lórántffy, the wife of György Rákóczi I. lived here. The castle acquired its Renaissance style during the rule of Prince Gábor Bethlen. Under Mihály Apafi I. the city was the center of the Transylvanian Principality. Several diets were held in the Knight Hall. During Habsburg rule the building served military purposes while for a period under the Communist régime the castle was famous as a Romanian prison.

Visiting **Kovászna/Covasna** County

The Búdös Cave in Torja/Turia

People used to say the gazes emerging from the Búdös (Stinky) Cave were exhalations from hell. Later thousands have visited the miraculous place emanating a daily quantity of 2000 m³ of CO₂ in order to treat their circulation problems or high tensions in a natural way. The sulfurous gaze might stink but it is an excellent remedy against inflammation.

They also say that owing to the benefic effect upon circulation, the cave works as an aphrodisiac as well.



Szekler National Museum

The building designed by Károly Kós in Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe has served the cultural development of the Szekler people for a hundred years. Each detail of the absolutely unique building, from its door-hinges to its wrought iron lamps is a masterpiece of local craftsmanship. The museum is one among a series of many famous works by the renowned architect. Several other Transylvanian cities can boast a building signed Károly Kós.



The St. Imre Church at Gelence/Ghelința

The oldest element of the minutely ornamented church built so many centuries ago is a one thousand years old stone stoop. The church is famous for its mural painting depicting the St. László legend and the agony of Christ. The church has also preserved details of runic writing and a 17th century painted boarded ceiling. In 1996 the church was included on the UNESCO list of the 100 most imperiled monuments. The church has been restored by now awaiting visitors and cult-tourists.



Szekler Gallop

One weekend each year is consecrated to a contest of galloping horses on the sand of the Giant Cellar Crest. The gallop paired with equestrian and cultural programs is unique in Transylvania. Thousands of visitors fond of horses and wine spend their leisure time here.

Visiting **Beszterce/** **Bistrița** County

The Teleki Castle in Komlód/Comlod

The castle built in 1756 is a typical Transylvanian baroque building. It has a high, baroque roof nevertheless there are Renaissance vaults in its underground. The entrance is also typically baroque, carved of stone with characteristic shell forms. The castle building is in a state of rapid decay. The ceiling has caved in, thus the building is at the mercy of the elements. The Teleki castle in Komlód/Comlod is a historical monument of international significance.



The Daffodil Meadow on Száka/Saca Hill

The Daffodil Meadow (*Narcissus angustifolius stellaris*) in the Radnai/Rodnei Mountains is special owing to its position at 1600 meters above sea level. In May, part of the hill is white with flowers. The protected flowers are only there for admirers for a two-week's period. Visiting tourists will find a sea of white flowers there.



The Paszmos/Posmuș Oak

The metal plate on its trunk reads: "Anno 1406". The date was established by the Széki Teleki counts who owned the castle and the neighboring domain from the 17th century. Transylvanian chancellor Count Mihály Teleki of Szék (1634-1690) bought Paszmos/Posmuș which remained in the ownership of the Teleki family until its 1948 nationalization. In 1948 the circumference of the oak was 640 cm. The oak witnessed the rise and fall of the Teleki family and estate.



The Farkas/Kogălniceanu Street Church in **Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca**

The Farkas/Kogălniceanu street church, registered on the national list of historic buildings, was built between 1486(1490)-1503, as an integral part of the Franciscan monastery church ensemble. In the middle of the 16th century the church was abandoned after the monks were driven out, and stayed devastated until 1579, when the church and the ruins of the monastery were donated to the Jesuit Order, who rehabilitated the church and reconstructed the monastery to serve as a college and later as the first Transylvanian university.

The buildings underwent another major stint of destruction after the Jesuits were also driven out in 1588. The church and the monastery-college were systematically demolished, including the roof structure and the vaulting system (nave). It was only in 1638



that the church was reconstructed seeking to follow as closely as possible the original form and structural solutions.

During these works, the southern tower was also rebuilt and a new roof structure placed over the entire church. The nave's gothic vaulting system was also reconstructed by masters brought from the territory of the present-day Lithuania and Latvia. Finally, in 1647, the church was put into use once again.

The church ensemble's troublesome history continued with several fires and a constant struggle to repair and rebuild the damages over the course of two centuries. It was as late as 1803 that the present day form of the Reformed College and professor's houses were built.

Since then, major reconstruction and restoration works on the buildings were led by famous Transylvanian architects Kálmán Lux in 1909-1912 and Károly Kós in 1941-1942. The last interventions took place between 2002 and 2006 when several key elements have been rehabilitated with modern materials.

Significant from a structural point of view is the removal of guano over the vaulting in 2007.

Visiting Szilágy/ Sălaj County

The Wesselényi Statue in Zilah/Zalău

The fate of young baron Miklós Wesselényi was strongly related to the historical fate of the region. The county decided to erect a statue in his memory in October 1891 and they asked János Fadrusz to create it. Each county of Hungary collected funds for the statue for a period of 9 years. The statue was unveiled in autumn 1902. As an outburst of nationalist feelings, the local Romanian authorities with help of the army removed the statue from its pedestal during an April night in 1935. The statue was unveiled anew on 8 September 1942 in the main square but it was surrounded by wooden planks during the Communist régime. As a result of RMDSZ petitions the pedestal was restored in 2002.



The Báthory Castle in Szilágysomlyó/Șimleu Silvaniei

There was an ancient castle in the settlement that is not mentioned in documents after 1251. There are no data regarding the lower castle built in the center of the settlement even though it played an important role in the history of the region and of Transylvania. The owner of the castle, the Báthory family gave several Transylvanian princes. The first István of the Báthory-branch was father to the Prince and voivode of Transylvania himself. The still standing Renaissance main gate has an inscription interpreted as 1592 or 1597. According to historians this was built by Zsigmond Báthory in 1592. The double coat of arms above palely displays the Báthory crest with the dragon fang. After the 1989 changes the István Báthory Foundation was established in Szilágysomlyó/Șimleu Silvaniei with the aim of gradually restoring the castle.



Visiting Szatmár/ Satu Mare County

The Reformed Church in Ákos/Acâș

The 800 years old church is among the most important monuments of county Szatmár/Satu Mare, an outstanding construction of the Hungarian Romanesque style. The basilica-type church is not plastered on the outside thus it has a characteristic brick-color. It has two eastern towers with star and rooster on their top heralding the victory of Protestantism. The church has folk-art furniture and painted benches manufactured between 1750 and 1776. This style, with its varied ornamental plant-motifs and boarded details is the late Transylvanian floral Renaissance.



The Károlyi Castle in Nagykároly/Carei

László Károlyi Lánosz started building the initial castle in 1482 at an authorization from King Mathias to build a stone manor. Mihály Károlyi fortified the rectangular building in 1592 during wars against the Turkish. Count József Károlyi demolished the old castle in 1794 and built a baroque castle designed by Joseph Bitthauer. In 1894 count István Károlyi reconstructed the castle again according to the design of Miklós Ybl. The new building was a neo-Gothic and neo-Baroque knight castle surrounded by a wide ditch. The 12 hectares castle park hosts several rare plants. The oldest tree in the park is a sycamore tree planted in 1810. In one extremity of the park there is a 33 m high water tower built in 1888 in a spot where in former times a famous beerhouse stood.

The statue of Liberty in **Arad**

The statue of Liberty in Arad was erected in memory of the martyrs of the 1848-1849 Hungarian Fight for Independence and its costs were entirely covered from funds gathered by public subscription.

On the huge bearing of the statue inaugurated in 1890 were placed the embossments of the 13 generals executed at Arad on October the 6th 1849.

The central figure of the statue group, Hungaria, the allegorical figure of Hungarian liberty raises a laurel wreath. There are four statue groups around the main figure: Waking Liberty, In Arms, The Spirit of Sacrifice and Dying Soldier.

The imposing monument was initially erected in the Liberty Square in Arad where it remained until 1925. Then the statue was disassembled and stored. After World War II there were several attempts at its restoration but these failed when the Revolution in 1956 came. In '56 the statue was transported to the Arad castle serving then as a Soviet garrison and it was locked away there.

Based on an agreement between the Romanian and Hungarian ministers of justice mediated by the RMDSZ the statue was taken in 1999 to the monastic quarters of the Gray Friars in Arad in order to be restored. The statue underwent a process of restoration and was finally accommodated in the Fireman's Square in Arad.



Gastronomy **Tasty Traditions**



Ménes/Miniş

The Land of Legendary Wines

The region around Arad known as the Ménes/Miniş vineyard consists of the settlements: Ópálos/Păuşliş, Ménes/Miniş, Aradkövi/Cuvin, Kovászi/Covăşinţ, Világos/Şiria, Galsa/Galşa, Magyarád/Măderat, Muszka/Mâsca, Pankota/Pâncota. It is a historical vineyard, one of the oldest in the Carpathian Basin. It was first mentioned in a document written in 1038 by which queen Giselle with permission from her husband, king Stephen, donated eight vines to the abbey of Veszprém.

Historical families, the Rákoczis, Báthorys, Haraszthys, Grassalkovichs had lands in the region while in a period the greater part of the region was a property of Rinaldo, Prince of Modena. Atzél István has totally renovated the famous Rákóczi cellar. The Bohus family has also had vines in Világos/Şiria.

Antal Grassalkovich did much to raise the fame of Ménes/Miniş wines. He built a castle, a cellar and dealt with wine-trading. He manufactured the legendary wine of the region, the red aszú. He did this in 1744 using Cadarca. Later they trained wine experts at the Grassalkovich castle.

The characteristics of the Ménes/Miniş region are benefic for red wines. The vineyard is the north end of the Villány-Szekszárd line and of Adriatic wine-growing.

The region is home to strong, red wines. It is not by chances that the legendary red aszú, the spicy Cadarca, the velvety red wines produced here became favorite drink of the Habsburg dynasty. Owing to these wines, for several centuries the region was a noble and worthy competitor of Tokaj.

A common feature of red wines produced here is their deep, brilliant ruby color.

Dr. Balla Géza established his wine cellar in this region. He grows the specific wines of the region on an area of 70 hectares. He produces white wine by modern, reductive methods and red wine the traditional way. His wines collected several prestigious awards. Beside wine-growing, the Wine Princess Ltd is engaged in wine tourism as well. They organize professional wine presentations and wine tasting for visiting groups.

The interesting and enticing atmosphere at Ménes/Miniş bewitches our guests at wine-tasting because the wine we produce "gives love sparks, gives thoughts wings and gives friendship warmth." (dr. György Csávossy).



Home-made Delicacies

Sweet Corn

Soak 750 grams of corn flour into 1250 grams of water for a night. Scramble 3 eggs with 3-4 spoonfuls of sugar, add a pinch of salt, a small pack of baking powder, a pinch of cooking soda, 3 spoonfuls of oil and 3 spoonfuls of sour cream. Pour the excess of water off the corn flour and mix it with the rest of ingredients. Place the mixture into a previously buttered oven pan and bake it. Cut the baked product into squares and serve it soaked in vanilla milk or milk and plum jam.



Rolled Corn Mush with Sheep Cottage Cheese

Pour well cooked corn mush onto a piece of clean kitchen linen and mould it into a rectangular form. Spread sheep cottage cheese over its entire surface and tightly roll it. Slice the roll using a thread. Serve the slices with sliced onion. (Do not forget to cook the corn mash with a generous amount of salt.)

Eggplant Salad

Bake two-three medium-sized eggplants on coal or on an iron plate. Peel them, drain them and finely chop them. Add a small quantity of onions, salt, pepper and a mayonnaise dressing prepared at home using mustard, oil and the yolk of one egg. If you don't use mayonnaise, slowly stir into the chopped and seasoned eggplant 100 grams of oil. Serve it spread on bread, garnished with sliced tomatoes and cheese.



The Cherries of Magyardécse/Cireșoaia

The settlement of 1600 souls is famous for its cherries as far as Rome and Madrid. Since 1893, each June there is a Cherry Festival in the village attracting now over 3000 visitors a year. Magyardécse/Cireșoaia is among the greatest fruit-growing centers in Transylvania. It has almost 70 varieties of cherry but it also grows apple, pear, sour cherry, walnut, vine and peach. Beside Red Gold and Black Gold, its most famous cherry variety is the Búzgó, allegedly brought by sea from America in the 1920 by a villager by the name of Búzgó.

Home-made Chocolate

Boil 500 grams of sugar with 100 grams of water until it totally melts, then melt into it 125 grams of butter. Mix as much cocoa powder with 250 grams of dried milk powder as gives you a medium dark mixture. Mix the cocoa and milk powder with the sugar and butter until it is completely smooth. Pour the mixture into a previously buttered oven pan and let it harden. Slice it and serve it.



Szekler Products

Tradition in a New Brand



Szeklerland is a European region rich in living traditions. Introducing the Szekler Product brand the Hargita/Harghita County Council promotes traditional, quality and healthy Szekler food on the market.

Copyrighting the Szekler Product brand and distributing these products on the Romanian and international market we are offering European consumers the fruits of the Szekler tradition. We promote Szekler Products in Romanian and international fairs and establish factories processing local products in Szekler settlements.

Our aim is to turn the Szekler Product into a well known and appreciated brand all over Europe.

Corporate bodies or small entrepreneurs can solicit the right to use the „SZÉKELY TERMÉK/ PRODUS SECUIESC/SEKLER PRODUKT” brand but they need to be registered and to lead their specific activity in the Szekler region.

Their activity should aim at preserving and continuing local traditions, to preserve the good name of specific products and to augment the fame of Szeklerland. They need to offer specifically local products or services. Trade products

should relate to local traditions and secure income for the population in the region.

They are directly accountable for the quality of the product and for the circumstances of its fabrication.

Products should mostly be fabricated using local prime material. In case of industrial production the origin of the prime material has to be certified.

The Szekler Product brand is a differentiating quality brand increasing the competitiveness of the product and safeguarding the quality and authenticity of the product. It also offers legal protection for producers against unfair competitors while also being an efficient tool for the sustainable development of the region.

Authentic

Raw materials come from local farms or authentic local producers. At least 50% of the processed material comes from within the borders of historical Szeklerland.



Natural

The processed material is produced without using chemicals or fertilizers. The products contain no conserving substances, artificial color-boosters and additives.

Traditional

The product has a documented history of at least 50 years or it has been manufactured using a traditional technique. The packaging is traditional and ecological.

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCT

Reliable

The product is made of natural raw material. Materials are brought from officially registered quality suppliers. Suppliers are mainly local producers and service-providers.

Unique

The raw material, appearance and packaging should be unique. The name of the product needs to refer to the place of origin of the product (county or settlement).

HANDICRAFT

Aesthetic

The form and ornaments should be harmonic. The employed motifs need to fit the raw material. Proper proportions and the harmony of components are a must.

Ethnographically authentic

The product should authentically reflect the culture of a traditional community. The method of production should be traditional employing traditional tools. In its form, motifs and use of color the product should relate to a given region or settlement.



Actual Szekler Products

So far a number of 390 products of 40 producers have gained the Szekler Product brand. These vary from food (home baked bread, kürtőskalács (chimney cake), honey-cakes, honey, jam, syrup, stuffed cabbages, brandy, mustard), handicraft (pottery, products made of natural raw material, folk costumes, clothes with traditional patterns), industrial products (ceramics, mineral water, bakery, wooden toys), spiritual products (logical games, board games, publications).



A Safe Future on Our Native Land

In the recent months the RMDSZ took the Hungarian communities' biggest and most wide-spread survey of the past two decades. Thanks to the Transylvanian Consultation, 80,000 families, more than 250,000 people share their opinion about their living conditions and their expectations towards the political representatives. The results made it clear that, especially due to the effect of the recession, the person's priorities are employment, salaries and pensions, simply said: the problems of everyday living. After these come the problems related to security, economic and social security and the problems of community specific to us. The role and responsibility of the RMDSZ thus became clear: we have to answer the challenges faced by the Hungarians from Transylvania drawing up specific ideas and plans.

Transylvania 2020 Community-led Local Development



President Kelemen: Everyday life is the main concern of our communities

Local plans of action were prepared before the local elections and in several places a competition of local development plans has been completed. The backing of the Hungarians was obvious for those candidates who presented a viable plan, who with their previous work proved that they were able to form the development of our villages, towns and counties according to the needs of the local communities. The overwhelming success of RMDSZ candidates proves that strategies that they proposed the most effective and their realization is our task for the coming years.

According to the expectations expressed in the consultation, there is a need for a development plan that takes into account the whole of Transylvania. This plan should be consistent with the Europe 2020 plan accepted by the European Union. In January 2012 the Economic Council of the RMDSZ started the public consultation of the Transylvania 2020 plan, which aims the sustainable and inclusive development of Transylvania.

In our vision the future of a thriving Hungarian community stays also in its economic success, expressed by high levels of employment, growing productivity and strong social cohesion. Our plan fits the Transylvanian development into the Europe 2020 framework, because

our main goal is the successful integration and cohesion of our region in the EU. We aim to give guidance towards a positive outlook of the upcoming years along the lines of the development priorities. Transylvania is a European region by definition characterized by the unity in diversity and wishes the validation of its local specificities.

MEP Winkler: The weak Romanian EU absorption rate meant less direct investments in development

Five years after Romania's accession to the EU, it is clear that the most negative experience is related to the use of European funds. The weak absorption rate of the EU funding means also important missed opportunities for the development of our country. Due to weak accomplishments, instead of getting closer, Romania increasingly moves away from the hard core of the EU and this could cause dangerous situations such as a long-term breakaway. The Economic Council of the RMDSZ initiated a development plan which is based on the results of a public survey. The intention is to highlight the developmental needs which can be satisfied with the help of EU funding in the next few years.

Naturally, the frame of the Transylvania 2020 development plan is the Europe 2020 Strategy; therefore it will fit perfectly into the system provisions of the new EU 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework. The success of Transylvania as a European region is guaranteed by the harmonisation of our plan with the EU priorities, and need to be built into Romania's national development strategy. According to our surveys one third of the Transylvanian development financing can be ensured using EU resources. Because these are non-refundable resources it is essential to improve the situation regarding the absorption rate of funds experienced in the past years. The EU funds are to be considered as direct investment into the development of our region.

Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for economic recovery

by István CSUTAK,
regional development expert

Integrated territorial strategies focused on appropriate regions are vital for the achievement of the smart, sustainable and inclusive areas. Identifying the unique characteristics and assets of each area and region, highlighting their competitive advantages represents the key of recovery until 2020. Stakeholders and resources will rally around an excellence-driven vision of their future.

The multiple challenges our area confronts - on economic, environmental and social level - show the need for an integrated and territorial place-based approach to deliver an effective response. The Transylvania 2020 course of action has arrived at a new stage. Following the public consultation, we can deliver the Operational Programme. Our vision is: how we imagine our own life in Transylvania during the 2014 - 2020 period. Which are the tools and means we consider useful in order to achieve the vision.

In such a brief presentation it is hardly possible to insert all the methodological steps and their results: statistical data, stakeholder analysis, problem trees, assumptions and threats and nevertheless produce a comprehensive risk analysis.

We understand the lessons inherent in the present absorption rate (included in the Risk Register, for a Monte Carlo method analysis). So far Strategic Objectives in fact represent the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) for Romania's Hungarian community, including presumptive financial allocations as well.

Regional convergence	100%	€452.250.000
ERDF	60%	€271.350.000
ESF	40%	€180.900.000

The Commission's way of thinking and working is coherent and predictable. In conclusion, based on working papers and proposals, we can deliver a valid document till 2020, on what means "Transylvania 2020", and which could be the tools our community can use.

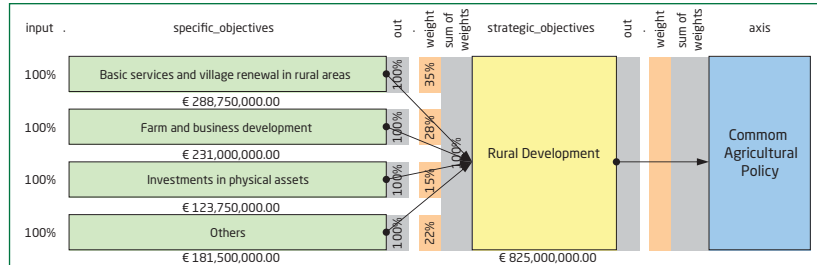


Fig. 1 CAP - Presumptive financial allocations

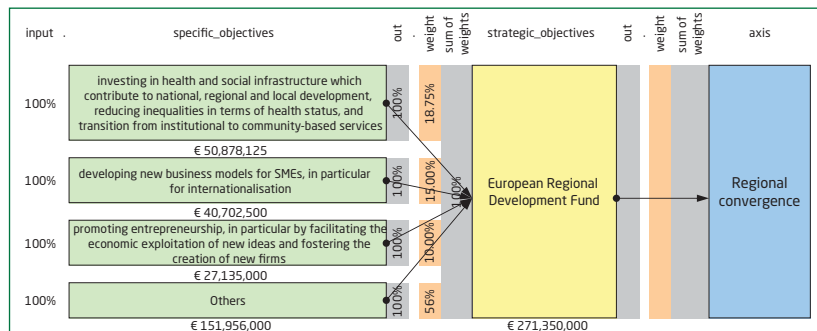


Fig. 2 Regional convergence - ERDF - Presumptive financial allocations

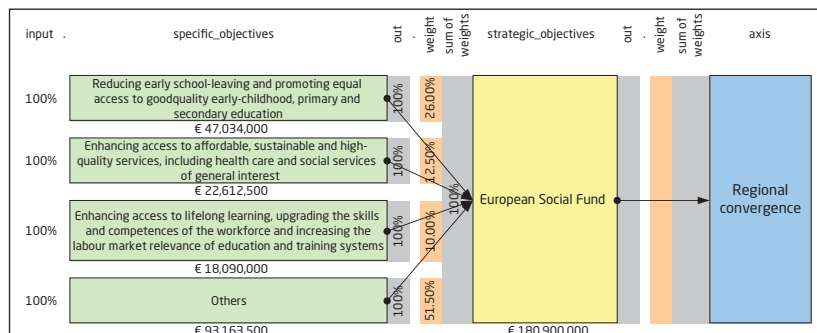


Fig. 3 Regional convergence - ESF - Presumptive financial allocations

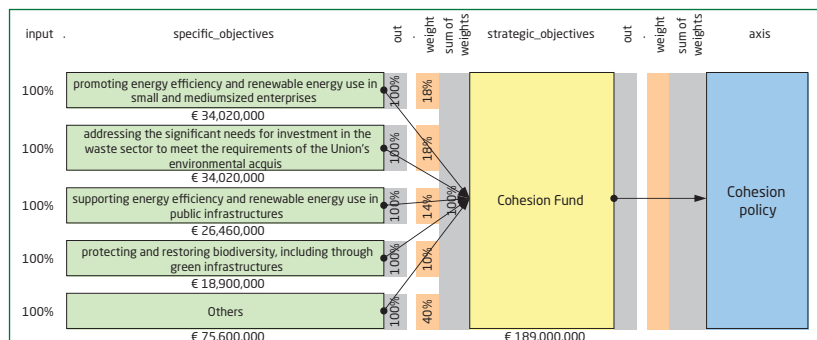


Fig. 4 Cohesion policy - CF - Presumptive financial allocations

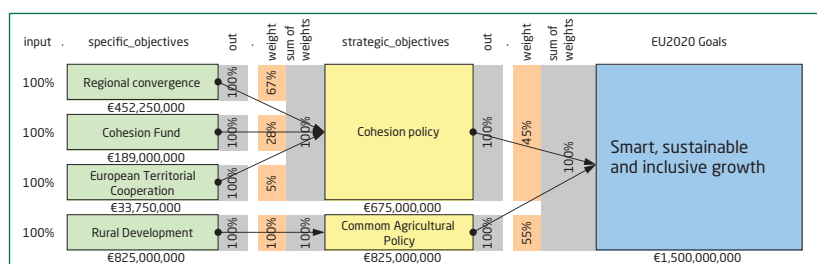


Fig. 5 - CSF Presumptive financial allocations

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People one could call a wanderer in the customary manner are scarce today. If there still be a few, they would for nothing in the world miss Transylvania when on the road. And they would never be sorry for visiting the place of so rare landscapes and such an outstanding community.

Áron Tamási: *The Cradle and the Owl* (Bölcső és bagoly)

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