

Áron Máthé

THE UKRAINIAN PUZZLE

HUNGARY'S PERSPECTIVE ON
A CHANGING NEIGHBOR

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**ALAPJOGOKÉRT
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- Hungary's Perspective on a Changing Neighbor

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FOREWORD

FOREWORD

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Since the outbreak of the war, Hungary has repeatedly been subjected to heavy criticism on account of the pro-peace policy pursued by its government. Serious accusations have also been voiced by politicians of the attacked country, Ukraine, the most salient of these being Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's recurring criticism of Hungary and the Hungarian government. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, President Zelensky claimed that Hungary financially supports the Russian war against his country through the procurement of oil. "Will the sixth sanction package be introduced? No. Why? Because of Hungary. Somehow, they don't see the world as it is," Zelensky exclaimed.¹ Additionally, he repeatedly expressed his view that "something is not right with Hungary".

All this, of course, had its antecedents in past events. One example for this we can see is the case of Sergey Melnichuk, a former member of the *Verkhovna Rada* and commander of the Aidar Battalion, a volunteer military detachment. On a live TV show broadcasted on the *NewsOne* channel in 2019 a caller raised an obviously provocative question of the chances for a Transcarpathian referendum on the *oblast* joining Hungary. Melnichuk replied that such an event is

¹ Zelenszkij: Magyarország az olajvásárlással finanszírozza az Ukrajna elleni háborút ['Zelensky: Hungary is financing the war against Ukraine by buying oil']. Index Online, URL: <https://index.hu/kulfold/2022/05/25/haboru-orosz-ukran-konfliktus-olajembargo-volodimir-zelenszkij-orban-viktor-eu-szankcio/>.

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out of question, given that “Ukrainian forces are ready to intervene, and two and a half hours would be enough for the 128th Mountain Assault Brigade to penetrate until Lake Balaton”.² The quote is especially shocking since just three years earlier, in 2016, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister stated the following: “I am very grateful for our Hungarian friends for offering consistent political support for the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine. Special recognition is due to the Prime Minister of Hungary and Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó for, among others, the prolongation of sanctions [against Russia] until the Minsk agreements are met.”³

How and when did the neighborly relationship deteriorate? What path leads to understanding? Who should make the first move to mend the relationship? Obviously, this book cannot attempt to answer all these questions. Instead, it seeks to shed light on the underlying intentions driving Hungarian policies, which have remained unchanged over the past decades regardless of the government in power. It will be revealed that the strategy in existence for over a decade is nothing more than a pursuit of good neighborly relations.

2 *Egy ukrán képviselő a NATO-tag Magyarország megtámadásáról beszélt* [‘A Ukrainian MP spoke about attacking NATO member Hungary’]. Origo Online, URL: <https://www.origo.hu/nagyvilag/20190320-egy-ukran-kepviselo-a-natotag-magyarorszag-megtamadasarol-beszelt.html>.

3 *Az ukrán külügyminiszter köszöni Magyarország támogatását* [‘Ukraine’s foreign minister thanks Hungary for its support’]. Hirado.hu Online, URL: <https://hirado.hu/2016/05/06/az-ukran-kulugy-miniszter-koszoni-magyarorszag-tamogatasat/>.

FOREWORD

The completion of the manuscript coincided with the illegal removal of a statue depicting a Turul bird, the totem of Hungarian national mythology, perched atop Palanok Castle in the city of Munkács, known in Ukrainian as Mukachevo. The statue has been replaced with the coat of arms of Ukraine. The Turul, erected to mark the 1000th anniversary of the Hungarian conquest, was first removed by Czechoslovak invasion forces in 1924. Later, in 1945, the occupying Soviets smelted the statue down to use its material for red stars meant to “crown” Soviet monuments. Finally returned to its place in 2008, the new Turul statue was funded by a Hungarian American hailing from the city, designed by a Ukrainian sculptor, and transported by helicopter from Kyiv. In a further confusing twist to the story, the sudden removal of the statue was decided by the very same mayor who had approved its reinstatement in the first place.

It is our hope that this book, a reflection of three decades of coexistence, will somewhat contribute to Ukrainian political and opinion-forming classes reaching the conclusion that Hungary is no enemy. In fact, the volume may also contribute to understanding that peaceful coexistence requires two parties. On the other hand, the factual material gathered may also offer answers to concerns troubling certain segments of international public opinion.

The book begins with an introductory study aiming to provide an overview of the confluences of 20th-century Hungarian-Ukrainian relations. The White Book itself, largely based on a selection of reports by the Hungarian News Agency Corporation (MTI), constitutes the second part of the present volume.

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Ukrainian national awakening had its beginnings in the 17th century. Despite this fact, relations between Hungary and Ukraine can only be examined from the 20th century, which saw the establishment of the Ukrainian state and political nation. In the following, we will examine the development of Hungarian-Ukrainian interstate relations and explore events of significance that shaped the relationship from World War I through the fall of the communist dictatorship to the period leading up to the years of regime change. Finally, we will review the role played by Hungary in the independence of Ukraine.

It is worth picking up the thread with Transcarpathia^{1,2}, the area where the two contemporary nations meet one another.⁴ Transcarpathia has been the concern of Russian tsarist, Pan-Slavic ideology since the mid-19th century. Rus-

1 Subcarpathia and Transcarpathia both refer to the same region: Закарпатська область, latinized: Zakarpatska Oblast. The prefix „sub” or „trans” expresses the historical viewpoint. From Hungary, it is „Subcarpathia”, because it is below the Carpathians. From Ukraine proper, it is Transcarpathia, because it is across (or beyond) the Carpathians. In this book, we use the „Transcarpathia” mostly, since nowadays this is more used in the international press.

2 The region, nearly 13,000 square kilometers in size, included four counties (Ung, Bereg, Máramaros and Ugocsa) of historical Hungary. Over the past century or so, many names for the region have been created, mostly following a distinct political concept. Examples for this include *Ruska Kraina* (‘Russian Country’), *Ugorskaya Rus* (‘Hungarian Russia’), *Zakarpattia Rus* (‘Transcarpathian Russia’), *Podkarpatska Rus* (‘Subcarpathian Russia’), *Zakarpattia Oblast* (‘Transcarpathian Ukraine’), *Zakarpattia* (Transcarpathia). See KOLONTÁRI, Attila, *Magyar-szovjet diplomáciai kapcsolatok 1920-1941* [‘Hungarian-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1920-1941’] (Budapest: Napvilág, 2009), 293-294.

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sian tsarist aspirations, cloaked in the robe of Orthodoxy, first appeared at the turn of the century, when Ruthenian peasants in Transcarpathia were promised land in return for converting to the Russian Orthodox Church. Legal procedures launched in the period known as “schism trials” reveal that St. Petersburg already had its eyes on acquiring the area at the time.³ However, the proceedings failed to provide genuine support for the rise of the extremely vulnerable and impoverished Transcarpathian Ruthenians, also known as Rusyns, as promised by the proponents and agents of the schism movement.⁴ The Hungarian government of the time successfully launched the so-called “mountain action” among Ruthenians, with Ede Egán, the government commissioner responsible for the program, suffering an unexplained violent death. The “mountain action,” which featured highly promising economic and socio-political initiatives were extremely promising for today’s Transcarpathia and its mainly Ruthenian population, was eventually discontinued.⁵

3 MAYER, Mária, *Kárpátukrán (ruszin) politikai és társadalmi törekvések 1860-1910* [‘Carpatho-Ukrainian {Rusyn} Political and Social Endeavors, 1860-1910’] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1977), 111-112.

4 See GULYA, Károly, “A magyarországi rutén kérdés 1910-1914 között” [‘The Hungarian Rusyn Question Between 1910 and 1914’], *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis: acta historica* (Szeged, 1968). Gulya’s heavily biased, Marxist paper includes important data.

5 BRAUN, László, *A hegyvidéki akció története 1897-1910 között* [‘The History of Mountain Action Between 1897’], PhD thesis, University of Debrecen, 20.

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After the outbreak of World War I, the constant battles on the territory of Ukraine provided a breeding ground for a diversity of concepts advanced Ukrainian national intellectuals. In February 1917, a revolution overthrew the autocratic Tsarist regime in Russia. One month later, the Central Council of Ukraine (the *Tsentralna Rada*) was established in Kyiv, and the Ukrainian People's Republic was proclaimed. The term *Ukrainska Narodnia Respublika* can also mean Ukrainian National Republic; however, the former interpretation seems to be more relevant, as the legitimacy of the newly created state was primarily provided by the Ukrainian National Congress, consisting of delegates from socialist parties. Early on, the relationship with the Russian Provisional Government in Saint Petersburg was unclear, although differences soon aggravated. During the summer, when the new state attempted to set up its own armed forces, the first conflicts between Russian and Ukrainian units took place. In October, the Bolsheviks seized power in Petersburg through a coup, with an immediate peace deal at the top of their agenda. On December 15, 1917, a truce with the Central Powers was announced; then, on December 22, peace negotiations began. On December 25, 1917, the peace conference in Brest-Litovsk sent out a message to the Ukrainian People's Republic, inviting the new state to participate in negotiations. On February 9, 1918, the Ukrainian People's Republic signed the treaty with the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire, and the Kingdom of Bulgaria.

The attempt of the House of Habsburg to simultaneously occupy the Polish and Ukrainian thrones also deserves to be

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mentioned. Archduke Stephen of Austria wished to establish the “Polish branch” of the dynasty, while his younger son, Archduke Wilhelm Franz of Austria, was interested in setting up the “Ukrainian branch”. The head of the ruling dynasty, Charles I, Emperor of Austria, had his eyes on expanding Austria-Hungary into a confederate state with Poland and Ukraine. For a brief while, the imperial and royal government even reached an agreement with the Ukrainian People’s Republic to unite Ukrainian territories under Habsburg rule. However, this plan was opposed by a significant number of both Germans and Ukrainians. Interestingly, the extraordinary diplomatic representation opened in Budapest by the Ukrainian People’s Republic in 1918 was the short-lived state’s final diplomatic mission, ceasing its operation in 1924.⁶

While there is no room for the detailed discussion of Habsburg aspirations within this book, two aspects should be mentioned. Firstly, new Polish and Ukrainian military units were partly formed on the basis of imperial and royal forces. Secondly, while Archduke Stephen and his elder son Albrecht built a solid existence in Poland, becoming respected public figures of the state as major landowners, Wilhelm failed to set foot in Ukraine. After 1918, Ukraine remained the scene of armed conflict and civil wars for another three

6 See MATIASH, Irina, “Az Ukrán Népköztársaság budapesti diplomáciai képviseletének története, 1914-1924” [‘History of the Diplomatic Representation of the Ukrainian People’s Republic in Budapest, 1919-1924’], *Levéltári Közlemények* 89 (2018), 403-422.

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years. Moreover, among the powers sharing the territory of today's Ukraine, neither the new Polish state nor Bolshevik Russia tolerated Ukrainian nationalism (not to mention a Habsburg). However, these are far from the only reasons behind Wilhelm's lack of success. Napoleon once said that the Habsburgs are always late for everything. Wilhelm stayed faithful to the traditions of the dynasty, and during the spring and summer of 1918, complying with the request of his brother, the emperor, he refused the invitation to take over Ukraine. With that, the historical moment lapsed, and he lost his foothold in Ukraine. Archduke Wilhelm subsequently became well-known figure in the European political *émigré* circles. During his tormenting life, he came into contact with dubious figures (including the infamous Ignatius Trebitsch-Lincoln), and later turned towards the Nazis. Eventually losing faith in them too, he was arrested by the Gestapo together with his 'Polish' brother. Although both were set free, the two met very different fates. Wilhelm became part of anti-German secret service operations spanning Europe, while Albrecht was liberated from a labor camp. After the war, Albrecht was able to return home for a short time and later emigrated to Sweden; Wilhelm was arrested by the Soviets in Austria and died in Soviet imprisonment.⁷

⁷ For the lives of Albrecht and Wilhelm, see Timothy SNYDER, *The Red Prince: The Secret Lives of a Habsburg Archduke* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

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Let us now return to Hungary in the last months of World War I. Ruthenian émigré groups overseas moved towards the idea of Greater Ukraine during the early years of World War I. After 1918, joining a prospective Ukrainian state was also considered by certain circles in Transcarpathia. The original idea of Ukrainianism, as it was known in the period, stems from the myth of the one-time Cossacks, which also carried the culture of political violence. Miklós Kozma, the erstwhile Hungarian governor of Transcarpathia, described Cossack traditions in his battlefield diary as follows: “These are a people who despise a peaceful existence, live by the laws of nature, and whose creed is violence; in fact, it would be more fitting to call them a group, as a people includes women too, but women were banned from their hideouts. They also have a beautiful, melancholic folk songs, fresh, and delightful lyrical poetry.”⁸ Their contemporaries, stuck between Serbs’ aspirations and Romanian irredentism, failed to realize that “Ukrainianism” also had its Ruthenian followers.

These were the antecedents to the proclamation of union with the West Ukrainian People’s Republic, established in Galicia, in Khust (Huszt) during the fall of 1918. However, this turned out to be an empty gesture, due partly due to the single successful venture of the Hungarian central government led by Mihály Károlyi taking place precisely in Trans-

⁸ KOZMA, Miklós, *Egy csapattiszt naplója 1914-1918* [‘Diary of a Company Officer, 1914-1918’] (Budapest: Méry Ratio, 2014), 319.

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carpathia. This enabled an agreement with pro-Hungarian representatives of the Ruthenians, leading to the creation of the autonomous Ruska Kraina region.⁹ On the other hand, it can also be attributed to the fact that the Polish liquidation of the West Ukrainian People's Republic after eight to nine months of fighting was met with apathy from the region's Ukrainian population, exhausted by the prolonged war.

On People's Law X, entering into effect on December 25, 1918 and declaring autonomy for the Ruthenians, the following can be found in the contemporary press: "Regarding the autonomous legal area of the Ruthenians, Section 2 of the law states that the Ruthenian-populated regions of Máramaros, Ugocsa, Bereg and Ung counties are to form an autonomous territory (governorate) under the name Ruska Kraina. The settlement of the public law status of Ruthenian-populated areas in Zemplén, Sáros, Abauj-Torna and Szepes counties will remain pending until the conclusion of the peace agreement. The borders of Ruska Kraina will be temporarily established by a joint committee of delegates of the Hungarian People's Republic and Ruska Kraina un-

9 Ukrainian militants who advanced as far as Munkács (Mukachevo) were in the Transcarpathian region only for a few days, while the fairly weak Czechs and the far stronger Romanians were still unable to join forces. Consequently, the Károlyi government was able to keep the territories of Munkács and Beregszász (Berehove), as well as the northern part of the Máramaros area, which allowed the possibility to create an autonomous region. Pál HATOS, *Az elátkozott köztársaság. Az 1918-as összeomlás és az őszirózsás forradalom története* ['Damned Republic: The History of the Collapse of 1918 and the Aster Revolution'] (Budapest: Jaffa, 2018), 298.

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til the final decision of the international peace conference,” wrote the radical Marxist, social democratic newspaper *Népszava*.¹⁰ On the other hand, the tone struck by *Pesti Hírlap* revealed a certain unease: “heavy Ukrainian and Czech propaganda is under way in the Ruthenian-populated counties. The Czechs especially are handing out millions among the Russian-speaking population to persuade them of joining the Czechoslovakia. The government expects that the new people’s law will create general reassurance among the Ruthenians and strengthen their loyalty to the Hungarian state. Indeed, neither Czechoslovakia nor Ukraine could better honor their national values and autonomy than we do.”¹¹

Under the law, a “Rusyn Ministry” was established in Budapest. The ministry was set up by Oreszt Szabó, an official from the Ministry for Internal Affairs, in the basement of the Ministry of Justice... On the “field,” in Munkács (Mukachevo), Ágoston Stefán, a blatant lawyer from the town of Rahó (Rakhiv), assumed the role of governor. But what did the Ruthenians themselves think? From reports of pro-

10 *Törvény a ruthének nemzeti autonómiájáról*. [‘Law on the national autonomy of the Ruthenians’]. *Népszava*, December 25, 1918. Quoted by György GYULAI, Attila DEMKÓ: *Napról napra Trianon* [‘Trianon Day by Day’] (Budapest: Redakció, 2020).

11 *Néptörvény a ruszin nemzet autonómiájáról*. [‘People’s law on the autonomy of the Rusyn nation’]. *Pesti Hírlap*, December 25, 1918. Quoted by György GYULAI, Attila DEMKÓ: *Napról napra Trianon* [‘Trianon Day by Day’] (Budapest: Redakció, 2020).

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pagandists working in the field, it is clear that they were unconvinced by the seriousness of Hungarian intentions, while others had already committed themselves to Ukraine or Czechoslovakia. However, these reports also had an optimistic tone, as they believed that public opinion could be flipped over through enduring work.¹²

However, several underlying factors made this an impossibility. In late 1918, the Hutsul People's Council was the first to be established, with the town of Kőrösmező (Yasinia) as its seat; the council declared its intention of joining Ukraine. Yet, on December 22, the Hungarian military entered Kőrösmező and the Hutsul politicians fled for the mountains. At the end of the first week of January, an uprising broke out against the weak and unfirm Hungarian rule. Finally, Romanian royal forces arriving from the south put an end to this experiment. Yet these were the same Hutsul politicians who were present at autonomy negotiations in Budapest! Later, on January 21, a congress was held by the Ukranophile Ruthenian politicians in Huszt (Khust), where a decision to "reunite" with the Western Ukrainian People's Republic was made. The following day in Kyiv, the Ukrainian National Council has passed a coinciding proposal on the

12 SZAKÁL, Imre, *A Ruszka Krajna kísérlet* ['The Ruska Kraina Experiment']. Available on the website of Ferenc Rakóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, URL: <https://kmf.uz.ua/hu/hirek/a-ruszka-krajna-kiserlet/>.

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union of all Ukrainian territories, including “Uhorska Rus” – otherwise known as Transcarpathia.¹³

Accordingly, part of the Transcarpathian Ruska Kraina became “Soviet Ruska Kraina” within the Socialist Federative Republic of Councils in Hungary, with a separate commissariat. However, the remaining area too was soon occupied by Czechoslovak forces. Overseas Ruthenian émigré groups also supported the “Czechoslovak” solution.¹⁴ Later, it turned out that the Ruthenians were not happy with this decision, and the so-called “Hungaro-Russian” (as pro-Hungarian Ruthenians were called) joined supporters of Czechoslovak orientation to form a group with an explicitly “Carpatho-Ukrainian” identity. Meanwhile, Hungarian anti-Bolshevist forces briefly sought to propel an uprising in Transcarpathia, after which the partly Ruthenian volunteers moved to Poland (today’s western part of Ukraine) and fought for the Polish side in the Polish-Bolshevik (Russian) war.¹⁵ Kálmán Rátz, the leader of the group, later became famous (and infamous) as a “Soviet expert” in Hungarian public life.¹⁶

13 FEDINEC, Csilla, *Kárpátaljai autonómia, határváltozások 1918-1944* [“Transcarpathian Autonomy and Border Changes, 1918-1944”], 418.

14 HALÁSZ, Iván, *Ruszinok Szlovákiában* [‘Ruthenians in Slovakia’] Csilla FEDINEC, István CSERNICKÓ (eds.), *Ruszin voltam, vagyok, leszek...* [‘I Was, Am, and Will Be a Ruthenian’] (Budapest: Gondolat, 2019), 157-158.

15 ZAMOYSKI, Adam, *The Battle for The Marchlands* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 18.

16 MÁTHÉ, Áron – HORVÁTH, Angelus, *Hetvenkedő katona vagy dörszölt ügynök? Rátz Kálmán: Egy bizarr életút tanulságai* [‘Braggart

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Two decades later, when Hitler began shattering the Treaty of Versailles in the fall of 1938, the idea of creating a “Ukrainian Piedmont” in Transcarpathia arose in the ranks of the Nazi general staff. This would have served both anti-Polish and anti-Soviet purposes at the same time.¹⁷ However, this plan was later abandoned and the Germans raised no objections when, in March 1939, the Hungarian army reclaimed the Autonomous Region of Transcarpathia, established within Czechoslovakia only a few months prior.¹⁸ Led by Avgustyn Voloshyn, the proto-state was a particularly radical, fervently nationalist, and peremptory regime which went as far as establishing an internment camp for political prisoners.¹⁹ During its triumphant entry, the Hungarian army was confronted by only a handful of combat groups belonging to the newly-established Carpathian Sich,

Soldier or Cunning Agent? Kálmán Rác: Lessons of a Bizarre Life’], *Rubicon* 9 (2021), 82. Available online at: <https://rubicon.hu/cikkek/hetvenkedo-katona-vagy-dorzszolt-ugynok>.

17 Galicia, under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, had previously been referred to as the “Ukrainian Piedmont”. See Csilla FEDINEC – Mária FONT – Imre SZAKÁL – Beáta VARGA, *Ukrajna története. Régiók, identitás, államiság* [‘History of Ukraine: Regions, Identity, Statehood’] (Budapest: Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont – Gondolat, 2021), 279.

18 After the declaration of Slovak independence, Ukrainian nationalists tried to place Carpatho-Ukraine under German protection; however, they have received disheartening news from the Wilhelmstraße, as the Germans instructed them not to resist the Hungarian intervention.

19 The characteristics of the Voloshyn regime are discussed by Csaba B. STENGE, *Sources about the Voloshyn Regime’s Concentration Camp at Dumen Hill in 1938–1939 Limes* 2 (2020), 39–48.

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which were defeated in a series of minor clashes.²⁰ The only major confrontation took place at Vörösmező, a spot near Huszt (Khust), where Carpathian Sich soldiers failed to impede the entering Hungarian units despite having weapons acquired partly illegally from Czechoslovak armories. Surviving combat groups of the Carpathian Sich either left for Poland, where they were essentially crushed, or unsuccessfully tried engaging in partisan activity. Having reclaimed the territory, the Hungarian government led by Pál Teleki intended to provide autonomy to the region. However, such efforts failed due to the ongoing war.

In the meanwhile, Ukrainian emigrants across Europe, and especially those under the protection of Nazi Germany, were already taking an interest in Transcarpathia. On the other hand, the Soviet Union also intended to acquire the region. Reports from the Hungarian embassy in Moscow suggested that the Soviets had not given up on the acquisition of Transcarpathia. A map published in the December 24, 1939 issue of the journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union featured Hungary in possession of territories returned to Hungary under the First Vienna Award but without Transcarpathia. The region in question, separated from the Soviet Union only by a thin line, was named Carpatho-Ukraine on the map. The region

20 FEDINEC, Csilla – VEHESH, Mykola (eds.): *Kárpátalja 1919-2009: történelem, politika, kultúra* [‘Transcarpathia 1919-2009: History, Politics, Culture’] (Budapest: Argumentum – MTA Institute for Minority Studies, 2010), 107.

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was named as a part of Carpatho-Ukraine, separated from the Soviet Union by only a thin borderline. This reminded the rapporteur, Hungarian Ambassador to the Soviet Union József Kristóffy, of a map of Bessarabia published in *Pravda*, “in which the borders between Romania and Bessarabia were marked with a thick line, while borders separating it from the Soviet Union were indicated by only a thin line”.²¹ During this period, Kristóffy was constantly receiving information from staff at the German embassy in Moscow suggesting that the Soviet government had not given up on Transcarpathia, because the “the Ukrainian question is not resolved as long as Ukrainians are living outside of the borders of the Soviet Union”.²²

The question is whether this successful chapter of Hungarian territorial revisionism represented a break in Hungarian-Ukrainian relations. To be clear, this was obviously not the case from the Hungarian point of view; on the other side, although Transcarpathia was part of the emerging Ukrainian national image, it was certainly not the most important item. What is sure, though, is that when German troops marched against the Soviet Union, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the famous and infamous OUN, distributed leaflets on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains, on Galician territory. In these, they called on the

21 PASTOR, Peter, *Hungarian-Soviet Diplomatic Relations 1935-1941: A Failed Rapprochement*. Translated by Attila ZSUPOS. *Századok* 140/1, (2006), p. 211.

22 *Ibid.*, 214.

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population to take action against Poles, Jews, Hungarians, and “Muscovites”.²³

In fall 1939, after the Polish state was dissolved, the appearance of the Soviets in the Carpathians seemingly evoked a moment of Pan-Slavic enthusiasm from a part of the Transcarpathian Ruthenians. In an absurd twist, unrest was provoked by White Russian émigré Orthodox priests and members of the Carpathian Sich, not least against pro-Hungarian Ruthenians.²⁴ By late June 1941, thousands of Ruthenians identifying as Ukrainian had fled to the Soviet side.²⁵ For most, the reason for this was Pan-Slavic incitement or Soviet propaganda; for some, it was livelihood; still others were driven by adventurousness. Anyhow, some of them wished to see the arrival of the Red Army and acted as intermediaries for Soviet occupation. They were to be disappointed bitterly; the underfed Red Army soldiers who did cross the border did so only in search of food.²⁶ During this period, Ruthenians of Ukrainian identity who crossed the border were also joined by Hungarian left-wingers and Hungarian Jews who either believed the concocted, ideal-

23 FEDINEC (et al.), *Ukrajna története*, op. cit. 367.

24 Orthodox priests are also mentioned by C. A. MACARTNEY in *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary*. Translated by János TUDÓSTAKÁCS (Budapest: Gede Testvérek, 2006), 477.

25 FEDINEC, Csilla, “A magyar Szent Koronához visszatért Kárpátalja,” 1938-1944 [“Transcarpathia Returned to the Holy Hungarian Crown”] (Budapest: Jaffa, 2015), 125.

26 MACARTNEY, C. A., *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary*, op. cit. 477.

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ized “worker’s paradise” image of the Soviet Union or were fleeing in search of a better life, from the prospect of ever darker perspectives and deprivation of rights. Among the contingent of thousands of Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians escaping across the Soviet-Hungarian border, there were also hundreds of Rusyn-Ukrainian secondary school students. A difficult fate awaited those who crossed the border illegally. They were sentenced based on Article 80 of the Soviet Criminal Code, implying up to 10-20 years of forced labor.²⁷ Others, mainly young people, were held in filtration camps, and were deported only after several months, often gravely ill and weak. This was captured on film by Hungarian authorities. Many of the forcibly returned young people requested permission from education officials to tell of their experiences of the Soviet world in Transcarpathian secondary schools.²⁸

After the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the world changed. As mentioned earlier, Hungarian troops entering Soviet territories were initially met with hostility by Ukrainian nationalists. The same is not true, however, of majority of the population, which in many cases welcomed Hungarian soldiers with flowers or bread and salt. Today, many paint a romanticized picture of the Organization of

27 The issue is mentioned by János BOTOS, *Magyar zsidók szovjet lágerekben 1939-1956* [‘Hungarian Jews in Soviet Labor Camps, 1939-1956’] (Budapest: Jakab és Komor tér 6. Egyesület, 2018).

28 BOTLIK, József, *Kárpátalja – ismét Magyarországé: 1939-1944* [‘Transcarpathia – Part of Hungary Again’], *Honismeret* 2 (1997), 44.

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Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsiya ukrayins'kykh nationalystiv*, OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiia*, UPA) founded by it, while others describe it as essentially a national socialist organization guilty of war crimes. In the following, we attempt to provide an unbiased introduction to the two formations. The OUN was a radical, far-right group fighting for Ukrainian independence and statehood, established in 1929 by representatives of emigrant Ukrainian organizations. The main goal of the OUN was to liberate populations speaking of Ukrainian or Ukrainian dialects living in territories of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania from foreign rule, while uniting them in a single state. In seeking to achieve its goals, the OUN did not shy away from terrorism. In 1940, the movement split in to two, OUN-M and OUN-B, named after their respective leaders. OUN-M, the more moderate wing, was led by Andriy Atanasovich Melnyk; the radical OUN-B faction, known as the Banderites of “Bandera’s people,” was headed by Stepan Bandera. On June 30, 1941, OUN-B announced the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state in the German-occupied Lviv (Lemberg, Lwów), while expressing loyalty to Hitler.

However, the Germans arrested the leaders of the movement and detained almost and fifteen hundred of its men. On the other hand, OUN-M members could hold minor positions within the administration of the occupied regions for a while, and a struggle between the two wings of the organization – the collaborators and the radicals – quickly ensued. In an unexpected twist, the Germans eventually put an end to the consolidation of OUN-M through arrests and

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executions. In 1942, Hungarian authorities also took action against OUN activists in Transcarpathia, who were tried by a military court. By that year, 1942, OUN-B had consequently taken the initiative in Ukraine proper and pushed out OUN-A from the region for good; unifying several smaller resistance groups and taking one of their names, they established the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. The victims of these showdowns are thought to number in the thousands. Meanwhile, Stepan Bandera himself was held captive in the political prisoner unit of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp right up until 1944.

Hence, UPA became the guerrilla army of the OUN-B, its members recruited in large numbers from the ranks of the German-established Ukrainian Auxiliary Police. It should be clarified that a number of Ukrainians joined the auxiliary units of the German occupiers with the agreement or instruction of both OUN groups in order to gain weapons and military training. As a result, many of them were part of Nazi war crimes committed on the territory of today's Ukraine, including active participation and complicity in the Holocaust. While their ideological disposition was eclectic, their ideas relating to the Jews were based on violent, radical anti-Semitism.²⁹

29 HIMKA, John-Paul, "What Were They Thinking? The Attitude of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists toward the Jews". Dieckmann, C. – Zeltser, A. (eds.): *Distrust, Animosity, and Solidarity: Jews and Non-Jews during the Holocaust in the USSR* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2021), 36-39.

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By early 1943, UPA had established a major network of underground operations; moreover, it even created a state in the Rivne (Rovno) area, complete with schools, hospitals, and training centers. UPA units fought against Polish guerrillas and Soviet partisans, as well as German and Hungarian invaders. At the same time, their relationship with the Germans was characterized not only by conflict but also, in certain cases, by cooperation, especially after spring 1944. The role of the central UPA leadership in this is subject to controversy; it is certain, however, that at this point Ukrainian insurgents were already preparing for fighting the Soviets, reinforcing or recreating their underground structures.³⁰ Somewhat earlier, in the summer of 1943, negotiations began between the occupying Hungarian troops and the underground nationalist movement. The accelerating advancement of the Red Army, together with dissatisfaction with the Germans, pushed the parties to one side. There was a need to put an end to fighting at least against each other, and that was what they did. In spite of this, relevant Hungarian occupying units took the Poles under their protection and occasionally even provided Polish self-defense squadrons with weapons during the Volhynia massacre, which saw Ukrainian insurgents and their supporters horrifically slaughtering the Polish minority.³¹

30 BURDS, Jeffrey, "Agentura: Soviet Informants' Networks & the Ukrainian Underground in Galicia, 1944-48". *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 1 (1997), 92.

31 MIHÁLY, Lajos, *Véres Volhínia, avagy a téboly természetrajza*

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Several agreements were concluded between Ukrainian nationalist guerrillas and the Hungarian army. Eventually, local negotiations were supplemented by a high-ranking Ukrainian delegation visiting Budapest in late 1943, to be followed by a Hungarian delegate's arrival to Ukrainian territory. Although no comprehensive agreement was signed, Hungarian officers, medical supplies and weaponry were supplied to certain UPA units. In return, UPA provided food to Hungarian soldiers. An understanding was reached on the establishment of a future official Ukrainian representation in Budapest, and it was also agreed that Hungary will be willing to take in Ukrainian refugees in the event of further Soviet advancement.³² It is worth quoting the memorandum of an OUN leader at length on the "Hungarian question": "The OUN delegation expressed its opinion that the Germans had already lost the war in the East and will lose it on the whole. As a result, the Red Army will enter Ukrainian territory and will not stop at the Carpathians. It will try to penetrate further into the valley of the river Tisza, potentially bringing about a Bolshevik revolution in Central Europe, which remains a demand of the Soviet Union. The shared Bolshevik threat unites the Ukrainian and Hungarian peoples along a common interest and a common enemy,

[‘Bloody Volhynia, or the Anatomy of Madness’] *Kárpátaljalap.net*, Online, URL: <https://karpataljalap.net/2018/07/12/veres-volhinia-avagy-teboly-termeszetrajza>.

³² Pölhe, Dóra, “Banderista bűncselekmények” [‘Banderite Crimes’], *Eszmélet* 2 (2015), 80.

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the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian people is willing to partake in all-pervading resistance against the Bolshevik threat and is ready to fight shoulder by shoulder with any people that respects Ukrainian people's struggle to establish an independent Ukrainian state. The Hungarians agreed with the assessment of the situation on the Eastern Front and the threat of Bolshevization in Central Europe. Furthermore, they confirmed the statements of the Ukrainian delegation, according to which the Bolsheviks are a common enemy of the two peoples. The creation of an independent Ukrainian state is in their interest and they have a sincere desire to share a border with Ukraine. They are also ready to defend their borders from the Red Army by any means necessary; however, they do not wish to send their troops to fight against the Red Army in other eastern areas." At the same time, Hungary offered to mediate between the Poles and Ukrainians.³³

During the spring of 1944, Ukrainians made a repeated offer; in a letter sent to the 16th Hungarian Division, they surrendered Transcarpathia. The same was confirmed by

33 Information based on the testimony of M. D. Stepanak, member of the central leadership of OUN, on the relations between the OUN-UPA and the Hungarians from August 30, 1944. The document is published in Dóra Pölhe, *Banderista bűncselekmények*, op. cit. 81. On relations between Ukrainian and Hungarian military forces, see Oleksandr PAHYRYA, "Fejezetek az ukrán felkelő hadsereg és a magyar megszálló csapatok kapcsolattörténetéből. Volhínia és Dél-Polisszja, 1943-1944" ['Chapters from the History of Relations Between the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and Invading Hungarian forces. Volhynia and South Polissya, 1943-1944']. *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 2 (2011), 496-508.

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Major-General Bogdan Zubenko's Order Noi 896, issued in early fall 1944: "Hungarian soldiers are a great help to us in defeating the Soviets. [...] By now, we have reached the understanding that we have previously been unable to achieve with the Hungarians in the military and political field. Therefore, we must not continue a foolish fight for a handful of land [Transcarpathia] while surrendering our most beautiful homeland [...] to Moscow."³⁴ Accordingly, it is understandable that during the summer and fall of 1944, several joint Hungarian-Ukrainian operations took place against the Soviets. Likewise, outer (Galician) approaches to the Tatár (Yablunytzia) Pass were jointly defended by the Hungarian army and the UPA against Soviet assailants.

In mid-October 1944, the Hungarian government attempted to pull out of the war and renounce the alliance with Germany. However, these efforts were unsuccessful, and the Germans used a well-organized operation to bring the Arrow Cross Party, the Hungarian equivalent of the Nazis, to power. By then, the front had progressed to Hungarian territory and Ukrainian refugees were an everyday sight in a country that had become a battlefield. At the end of 1944, a group of Ukrainian fighters retreated to Hungary and took part in the defense of Budapest. We also know that during the summer and early fall of 1944, some leaders of

34 Document cited by István RAVASZ, *Az ukrán-magyar katonai kapcsolatok a XX. század első felében* ['Hungarian-Ukrainian Relations in the First Half of the 20th Century'] Available online, URL: <http://magyar-corvinuslibrary.com/ruszin/upa.pdf>.

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the Ukrainian guerrilla movement fled through the operational area of the Hungarian First Army in the Carpathians and then crossed Hungary to reach the West, where they established émigré organizations.³⁵

By this time, fall 1944, the war has reached Transcarpathia. It would probably be an overreach to include what happened in Transcarpathia after Soviet occupation in October 1944 as part of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations. After all, it is true on November 19, 1944, the meeting of so-called people's delegates passed a resolution on "reunification" with Ukraine, which states that "by the will of the people, the Transcarpathian people freed from the German-Hungarian captivity is to join the motherland, the Soviet Union".³⁶ It is also true that not long after, on November 26, a so-called Manifesto was issued, which proclaimed that "Hundreds of years of foreign oppression has ended on Ukrainian soil. The congress, on behalf of the people of Zakarpatska-Ukraine, expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the victorious Red Army that banished the German-Hungarian fascist conquerors and brought joy and happiness to our people. [...] Long live Marshal Stalin, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Army. For centuries, the people of Zakarpatska-Ukraine were torn away from their mother country, Ukraine, and doomed to extinction. Peasants, the vast majority of its people, were

35 RAVASZ, István, *Az ukrán-magyar katonai kapcsolatok a XX. század első felében*, op. cit.

36 Cited by Natália Váradi, "A szovjet hatalom kiépítésének kezdeti lépései Kárpátalján 1944–1946".

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deprived of land. The treasures of our people acquired through blood, sweat, and tears were seized by foreign oppressors. [...] They could do this to us because ripped away from our homeland, Soviet Ukraine, we were defenseless. They could only behave this way with us because we failed to make our people part of Soviet Ukraine. We therefore fell behind the family of the great peoples of the Soviet Union. During the course of its history, the people of Zakarpatska-Ukraine went into battle against its foreign oppressors on several occasions. After being liberated from German-Hungarian fascism, the people of Zakarpatska-Ukraine embarked on joining Soviet-Ukraine, thereby realizing its eternal dream once and for all.³⁷ However, all this had no impact on Hungarian-Ukrainian relations as of yet, given that Transcarpathian Ruthenians got the same as a reward as Hungarians got for punishment: Soviet oppression, terror, and collectivization.

In Ukraine proper, guerrillas of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army were still involved in rearguard action against Soviet oppressors. The term ‘rearguard action’ is in need of clarification: owing to Soviet victories, the Ukrainian guerrilla

37 “A Zakarpatszka-Ukrainai Népbizottságok első kongresszusának kiáltványáa Zakarpatszka-Ukraina Szovjet Ukrainával való egyesítéséről” [‘Manifesto of the First Congress of People’s Committees in Zakarpatska-Ukraine on the Unification of Zakarpatska-Ukraine and Soviet Ukraine’]. József BOTLIK – György DUPKA, *Ez hát a hon: Tények, adatok, dokumentumok a kárpátaljai magyarság életéből 1918-1991* [‘This is the Fatherland’: Facts, Data and Documents of the Life of Transcarpathian Hungarians, 1918-1991’] (Szeged: Mandátum – Univerzum, 1991), 151.

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movement had essentially crumbled. By late 1945, however, the cohort of UPA cadres had gained strength as a counteraction to the harsh terror inflicted by Soviet authorities, leading to a new phase in the rebellion. Naturally, the UPA also reacted to this terror by its own means.³⁸ In retaliation, Ukrainian guerillas also started to use the policy of deterrence, and terror was first levied by at residents considered “traitors” by the UPA;³⁹ later, everyone became “suspicious”. Meanwhile, the region also suffered from famine. A favored Soviet method to humiliate the UPA was to force the nationalist guerillas (“Banderites”) to testify in front of a whole village. In several cases, this was followed by mob justice. In relation to this spiral of violence being set loose, we should raise a tough question: did these public confessions, extorted by the Soviets, genuinely lack any foundation? Or did the emotional state of the villagers mean that they only cared about finding a *perpetrator* at random who could be blamed and punished for the sweeping, horrific misery?

By 1949, the Soviets had successfully assumed control of the regions in question, including Western Ukraine, the territory of the former Galicia and Volhynia. Tens of thousands were deported into exile and to Gulag labor camps. It is a recurring theme in Hungarian Gulag memoirs that apart from

38 See MARPLES, David R.: *Heroes and Villains. Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007. Available online at: <https://books.openedition.org/ceup/547>.

39 BURDS, Agentura, op. cit. 104-111.

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the Chechens and Balts, “Banderites” formed the best-organized community within political convicts held in the Gulag. Soviet guards’ acts of mischief, which saw organized groups of common criminals unleashed on those held captive, were often directed at “Banderites,” who in turn sought to retaliate. Consequently, in the cruel internal system of relations within the camps, UPA guerillas and OUN sympathizers were usually left out of hierarchies among regular offenders, since the sworn “Banderites” formed well-organized gangs themselves.

At the beginning of this period, from November 27, 1944 – the establishment of the local “government” – until January 22, 1946, Transcarpathia operated as a *de facto* independent Soviet republic, with independent ministries and authorities. From November 17, 1944, the deportation of the Hungarian and German adult male population to a holding camp in Szolyva (Svalyava) began, where they were held captive together with prisoners of war. The typhus epidemic that was allowed to break out in the camp claimed at least fifteen thousand innocent lives. Although Ruthenians were not deported the same way as Hungarians and Germans, ethnic cleansing soon began among them too. Deportations were expanded to regions adjacent to Transcarpathia, such as smaller parts of eastern Slovakia, northeastern Hungary and Romania. This was done in preparation to establish a “Greater Transcarpathia,” which would have included the remainder of the historical Hungarian county of Bereg, Eperjes (Prešov, today in Slovakia) and what was known as Máramaros-Ukraine (modern-day Maramureș county in Romania). Hungarian, Romanian and Czechoslovak author-

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ities obviously tried to stop the expansion, and the Soviets eventually backed down. Whether this was a result of local, Ukrainian leftist forces and communists' actions or reflected higher intentions remains unknown.⁴⁰ Some years later, in 1949, another attempt was made at starting an uprising, or at least some kind of movement in Ukraine, this time by the United States. It is interesting to note preparations to establish connections with Ukrainian émigrés were made by Zsolt Aradi, a Hungarian advisor to the CIA (and its predecessors, the OSS and the SSU), who was also responsible for developing the strategy of the operation.⁴¹ Aradi served as a press attaché in Milan and then in Rome during World War II, later becoming a member of the anti-Nazi Hungarian emigration in Rome. In 1944, he was recruited by the Americans to join the OSS, the predecessor of the CIA; Aradi was to become one of the best European CIA agents in the post-war years.⁴² However, the CIA's secret mission

40 BOTLIK, József, "Kísérletek szovjet »Nagy-Kárpátalja« létrehozására 1944-1945-ben" ['Attempts to Establish a Soviet "Greater Transcarpathia" in 1944-1945']. *Trianoni Szemle* 1-2 (2019), 63-73.

41 Aradi played an essential role in establishing U.S. intelligence relations with the Ukrainians. In October 1946, he wrote the book *The Ukrainian Nationalist Movement* for the SSU. Using his connections with Ukrainian clergymen in the Vatican, he met emigrant leaders in Germany. RUFFNER, Kevin C.: *Cold War Allies: The Origins of CIA's Relationship with Ukrainian Nationalist(s)*. Available online, URL: https://archive.org/stream/ColdWarAlliesCIARelationsWUkrainianNationalists/STUDIES%20IN%20INTELLIGENCE%20NAZI%20-%20RELATED%20ARTICLES_0015_djvu.txt.

42 BARE, Duncan, "The curious case of Aradi Zsolt: Tracking the distinguished career of an OSS, SSU and CIA Central European asset". *Jour-*

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was discontinued in 1953 because Soviet authorities usually quickly arrested or shot the agents and saboteurs parachuted from airplanes.

The next major link between Hungary and Ukraine was the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, when Transcarpathia served as a groundwork for Soviet preparation to crush the uprising while also offering an escape route for certain figures of the Hungarian communist dictatorship. The airport at Ungvár (Uzhhorod) also served as a transfer stop during János Kádár's "outing" to Moscow, both on the way there and on the way back. When the Hungarian revolution broke out in 1956, discontent was first to manifest itself in Transcarpathia.⁴³ This mainly involved the Hungarian minority; however, the Ruthenian population, known by then as Carpatho-Ukrainians, also showed sympathy. "It would be time to follow the Hungarian example and clean things up here as well," a Kyiv-born employee of a post office in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) exclaimed in admiration of the revolution. Similar comments were routinely recorded in KGB documents dating back to this period. Moreover, Soviet state security agents also indicated that the local Hungarians and Ukrai-

nal for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies, 1 (2014).

43 DUPKA, György – HORVÁTH, Sándor, '56 Kárpátalján, *Dokumentumgyűjtemény* [“56 in Transcarpathia: A Selection of Documents”] (Uzhhorod – Budapest: Intermix, 1993); *Az 1956-os forradalom és szabadságharc kárpátaljai dokumentumai* [‘Transcarpathian Documents of the 1956 Revolution’]. Selected, published and introductory study by Natália Váradi. Edited by Sándor GALAMBOS. *A Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg megyei levéltár kiadványai, II. Közlemények* 43 (Nyíregyháza, 2012).

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nians are ready to take armed action against Soviet rule.⁴⁴ Unrest also spread to the whole of Ukraine. “In the western regions of Ukraine, kolkhoz [cooperative farm] employees stopped working. People stormed shops in search of salt and soap. Everything was sold out in two days.”⁴⁵ Even though the Soviets claimed to have crushed the underground movement in western Ukraine by early 1956, the situation was complicated by the fact that larger groups of exiles and convicts released from the Gulag under amnesty were only recently allowed to return to western Ukraine. However, these people came home to a changed world, and their re-integration was challenging (Soviet authorities did their best to make it even harder). Therefore, their attempts to ignite a new movement failed. Even without them, though, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 had a significant impact on the population of Soviet-Ukraine. That being said, the public mood of the time is best described as a general desire

44 PAHYRYA, Oleksandr, “Visszhang: az 1956-os magyar forradalom és az ukrán társadalom a szovjetállambiztonság dokumentumainak tükrében” [‘Echo: The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and Ukrainian Society in Light of KGB Documents’] Andriy KOHUT – Bendegúz Gergő CSEH – Magdolna BARÁTH – Irina LYABAKH – Oleksandr PAHYRA (eds.), *Visszhang: Az 1956-os magyar forradalom és az ukrán társadalom a KGB dokumentumainak tükrében* [‘Echo: The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and Ukrainian Society in Light of KGB Documents’] (Budapest-Pécs-Kyiv: State Archive Branch of the Security Services of Ukraine, Archives of State Security Service Records – Kronosz, 2022), 107.

45 Quoted by PAHYRYA, op. cit. 109.

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for peace, a strive for “anything but war,” a result of the hideous violence inflicted from 1939 to the 1950s.⁴⁶

On the impact of the Hungarian revolution on the Ukrainian nationalist émigré circles, we can read the following: “The events in Hungary gave a further boost to the training of military specialists among Ukrainian émigrés in Europe (Germany, Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands), so that they can later participate in the liberation movement on Ukrainian territories, should a new war or revolution break out in the Soviet Union. Additionally, cooperation between the OUN and the military-political alliance NATO, dating back to 1955, also gained strength.”⁴⁷

Over the ensuing decades of the Cold War, Hungarian-Ukrainian relations fade into obscurity; we do not necessarily believe that town-twinning agreements and economic interactions belong to our topic. We also lack information on how Ukrainian opposition circles or nationalist émigrés perceived the successful civil rights (linguistic and cultural) struggles that Transcarpathian Hungarians embarked upon in the 1960s and 1970s. Accordingly, talking about the re-establishment of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations is worthwhile only from the great Central European political landslide of 1989 onwards.

Consequently, the democratic transition saw the foundations of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations being laid by the

46 PAHYRYA, op. cit. 158.

47 PAHYRYA, op. cit. 124.

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new Hungarian government instead of émigré groups. At least, this was the case for a while.

“The Hungarian government is the first to support the creation and consolidation of an independent state through its actions,” Anatolij Zlenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, said on December 3, 1991.⁴⁸

Indeed, Hungary embarked upon the reestablishment of bilateral relations with great momentum; the country made sincere attempts to improve the situation of Transcarpathia and supported the Ukrainian independence with determination. During this period, Hungary was capable of influencing the future of the entire continent; consider, for example, the teardown of the Iron Curtain, which resulted in the fall of the GDR; the abolishment of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, both were initiated by Hungary and signed in Budapest; or support provided for the Croatian War of Independence in the form of arms shipments, and the recognition of Slovakia as an independent state. Assistance for Ukraine to reach diplomatic and political sovereignty also fits into this pattern.

All of this, however, was preceded by events during the *annus mirabilis*, 1989. Today, it fades into history that

48 Géza Jeszenszky's report to the government on his visit to Ukraine, August 12, 1991. Sáringer, János (ed.), *Iratok az Antall-kormány külpolitikájához és diplomáciájához. Vol. II (January – December 1991)* [‘Documents on the Foreign and Diplomatic Policy of the Antall Government’] (Budapest: Magyar Napló – VERITAS Történetkutató Intézet, 2018), 316. [Emphasis added – Á. M.].

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Károly Grósz, General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, traveled to Transcarpathia for a brief visit in April 1989. During the trip, Grósz met with the region's party and council leaders, the head of the Hungarian faculty at the Uzhhorod State University, as well as party activists from some Hungarian-inhabited districts. According to a report published in *Népszabadság*, "Károly Grósz and his entourage left the regional capital for a visit to the countryside together with the Soviet negotiating delegation. The news spread like wildfire in the villages en route, and the guests were greeted by lines of people everywhere."⁴⁹

In his speech given in Beregszász (Berehove, then known by the Russian name of Beregovo), Grósz exclaimed: "Transcarpathia, your homeland and that of other nationalities living here, is also dear to us Hungarians. Great periods of the Hungarian history are attached to the region. The fate of Transcarpathian Hungarians was, without doubt, cloaked in silence and unjustified pudor for decades. Today, we are happy to witness that local Hungarians are treated as equal citizens of the Soviet Union and they work with honor. Likewise, we are convinced that they will prosper, making good use of their knowledge and contributing to the wealth of their homeland. As a proof of this, opportunities for cultural connections, as well as material and organizational conditions for the conservation of national identity, have significantly expanded during the past period. [...] Neigh-

49 *Népszabadság*, April 4, 1989. 2.

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boring peoples understand our intentions and they are reciprocated by the leadership of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria.”⁵⁰ The omission of Romania from the final sentence is obviously no mistake. Grósz was keen to see last year’s embarrassing failure forgotten, when Nicolae Ceaușescu humiliated his Hungarian counterpart at talks in Arad. According to a memorandum by Anatoliy Merkulov, head of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine the Hungarian party leader had an informal meeting with his Ukrainian hosts upon his arrival to Ungvár (Uzhhorod), during which he said that purpose of his visit is to prove to the Hungarian public that it is possible to solve the minority issue within the framework of socialism.⁵¹

Grósz was wrong in several ways. He praised the Soviet policies on nationalities at a time when the Caucasus was smoldering with the Armenian-Azeri conflict, fueled in part by the KGB. He also spoke highly of Czechoslovakian policies towards national minorities, which was perceived utterly differently by Hungarians. Yugoslavia was soon

50 *Népszabadság*, April 5, 1989. 3.

51 SERES, Attila, *Örmények és azeriek a magyar diplomáciai iratokban 1985-1991* [‘Armenians and Azeris in Hungarian Diplomatic Documents, 1985-1991’], Part I: *Titkos jelentések a karabahi konfliktus kezdeteiről 1988-1990* [‘Secret Reports on the Early Phases of the Karabakh Conflict, 1988-1990’], *ArchivNet*, URL: <https://www.archivnet.hu/ormenyek-es-azeriek-a-magyar-diplomaciai-iratokban-1985-1991-i-resz-titkos-jelentesek-a-karabahi-konfliktus-kezdeiteiről>.

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to disintegrate and the Hungarian community in Austria moved towards complete assimilation. But what happened to Ukraine?

While not widely known, federal republics had the right to establish relations with other states, sign contracts with them, exchange diplomatic and consular representatives, and participate in the activities of international organizations under Article 80 of Chapter 9 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution, (It is worth noting that upon the foundation of the UN, the Soviet Union used a ploy to have its own member state, Ukraine, included in the organization with voting rights.) Undoubtedly, the opportunity provided by the Soviet Constitution of 1977 was only a pretense and not something that the member states seriously considered doing.

It is precisely for this reason that the first visit of an official delegation representing the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to Hungary in October 1989 can be considered an event of historic significance. The delegation of the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture was led by Yuriy Oleksandrovych Olenko. Let us now turn to the observations of a Ukrainian diplomat: "Ukrainian officials were welcomed like representatives of an independent state. Formal negotiations were held, as a result of which an agreement on cultural cooperation between Hungary and Ukraine was signed for the first time. This was the first bilateral international document in modern history signed by Ukraine without Moscow's approval."⁵² From the Hungarian perspective, this was de facto equivalent to the recognition of Ukraine as an independent country.

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For the time being, there was no sequel to the visit. However, after the first free Hungarian elections held in May 1990, the newly formed cabinet led by Prime Minister József Antall raised the (long-postponed) issue of the establishment of a consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) and simplifying border controls at minor crossing points. Additionally, the new Hungarian government also pressed for direct contact with the Soviet republic of Ukraine.

In June, István Íjgyártó, senior government counselor at the Prime Minister's Office, filed the following report about his visits to Transcarpathia and Lviv: "the tactics of the Rukh [the People's Movement of Ukraine] rely too heavily on nationalist sentiments, which may cause unpredictable consequences due to the underdevelopment of Ukrainian society. Moreover, such politics are also controversial because it actively leans on foreign (e.g., Polish) support despite xenophobia stirred up in the deep layers of society. Rukh is highly sensitive regarding Bukovina and Transcarpathia, where it is not strong enough and where the public opinion is also unresponsive to Ukrainian aspirations."⁵³

52 TKACH, Dmitro, "Egy ukrán diplomata visszaemlékezései" ['Memoirs of a Ukrainian Ambassador'] *Hromada – Journal of the Cultural Society of Hungarians in Ukraine*, 112 (2011), URL: http://hromada.hu/2011/nom_112/kilato/tkacs.html.

53 Report by István Íjgyártó, senior government counselor at the Prime Minister's Office, of his visits to Lviv and Transcarpathia, July 18, 1990. Sáringer, János (ed.), *Iratok az Antall-kormány külpolitikájához és diplomáciájához. Vol. I (May – December 1990)* ['Documents on the Foreign and Diplomatic Policy of the Antall Government'] (Budapest: Magyar Napló – VERITAS Történetkutató Intézet, 2015), 516.

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According to the report, Yaroslav Chernovyl, an anti-Soviet civil rights activists who had spent several years in jail, “inquired about how Hungary would react to the establishment of a Ukrainian foreign representation, already discussed with several neighboring countries (Warsaw, Bratislava). Due to lack of competence, I gave an evasive answer, but I also pointed out that the interests of both countries would be well served by an office set up for local border traffic in Nyíregyháza. [...] We suggested [together with the head of the association of Hungarians in Lviv] that Chernovyl should visit Hungary, and the reason for his travels should be the sister city relationship between Lviv and Pécs in order to avoid public attention. Chernovyl suggested that as a Member of Parliament, he could also be invited by the Hungarian Parliament.”⁵⁴

The Hungarian side had evidently stopped beating around the bush and was, by now, openly standing up for Ukrainian sovereignty. On July 16, 1990, the Ukrainian legislature passed what in effect was a declaration of independence. The lengthy document defined Ukraine as a sovereign state, although still part of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, this facilitated the official development of Hungarian-Ukrainian bilateral relations. The preparation of bilateral draft documents and agreements awaiting signature had started. On August 22, 1999, Tamás Katona of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary visited Transcarpathia,

54 Ibid., 515.

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where Hungarian-Transcarpathian direct negotiations took place. In August, the two foreign ministers, Géza Jeszenszky and Anatolij Zlenko, also had a meeting in Budapest. The Hungarian Foreign Minister's report on the encounter reads: "the Ukrainian negotiators expressed their gratitude to our country, given that Hungary was the first to support Ukraine's sovereignty. Among member states of the Soviet Union, is extremely important for us to build a particularly good relationship with our largest neighbor, Ukraine. This is primarily motivated by the potential of economic and commercial relations, and by the fact that the Hungarian minority living in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic numbers 200,000 people".⁵⁵ Later, in September that year, Hungarian President Árpád Göncz also visited Transcarpathia and Kyiv, where he was welcomed by Leonid Kravchuk, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR. On November 14, 1990, Anatolij Zlenko, Foreign Minister of the Ukrainian SSR, also dispatched an official invitation to his Hungarian counterpart Géza Jeszenszky, based on the agreements adopted during negotiations in Budapest. According to a Hungarian foreign ministry memorandum, "in our opinion, aligned with the Department for Hungarians

55 Géza Jeszenszky's report to the government on his visit to Ukraine, August 12, 1991. Sáringer, János (ed.), *Iratok az Antall-kormány külpolitikájához és diplomáciájához. Vol. II (January - December 1991)* ['Documents on the Foreign and Diplomatic Policy of the Antall Government'] (Budapest: Magyar Napló - VERITAS Történetkutató Intézet, 2018), 316.

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Abroad, the need to sign the declaration on national minorities would on its own justify a ministerial visit to Kyiv. The visit would also be in accordance with the spirit of the An-tall-Gorbachev summit.”⁵⁶

However, at this point the visit failed to materialize. On the one hand, the Soviets “firmly requested” the Hungarian side not to conclude any agreements with member states until the New Union Treaty has been signed. On the other hand, objections were raised by the Ukrainians regarding the minority code adjacent to the planned proposals. Yet, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister refused to sign the Polish-Ukrainian consular agreement as long as such a treaty was not in place with Hungary. He stated this with reference to the fact that Hungary was the first to invite him and that it was the President of Hungary who made the first official visit to Ukraine; for the Ukrainians, these were undoubtedly highly important political gestures pointing towards independence.

The Ukrainian negotiating delegation eventually arrived in Budapest on May 30, 1991. The chairman of the Transcarpathian Oblast Council was also a member of the delegation. However, the day before, the Soviet embassy in Budapest sent a warning to the Hungarian foreign ministry, according

56 Cited by Renáta PALÁDI, “Magyar-ukrán kétoldalú kapcsolatépítés az 1991 májusában aláírt kétoldalú egyezmények tükrében” [‘Building Hungarian-Ukrainian bilateral relations in light of bilateral treaties signed in May 1991’] *Újkor.hu*, URL: <https://ujkor.hu/content/magyar-ukran-ke-toldal-u-kapcsolatepites-az-1991-majusaban-alairt-ke-toldal-u-egyezmenyek-tukreben>.

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to which “Soviet Ukraine is not an unlimited international legal entity, and it can only shape its foreign relations in accordance with the Soviet constitution, laws and international obligations. Based on the generally accepted standard international law, only independent states are recognized as full participants in international relations. The Ukrainian SSR or any other Soviet state can only have a relationship with a third country, including Hungary, if that relationship is aligned with contractual relations between Hungary and the Soviet Union.⁵⁷

Regardless, the Hungarian side moved forward in pursuit of its own agenda. “This was the first high-level visit in the history of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations. It was the first series of negotiations covering the entire relationship between the two countries. The presidential visit was a confirmation from Hungary in being the first to assure Ukraine of its support regarding the declaration of its sovereignty. And its significance for our country is that among the member states of the Soviet Union, our relationship with the neighboring Ukraine is the most intense. This is reflected by the unprecedented number of documents signed during President Kravchuk’s visit,” Géza Jeszenszky wrote in his report.⁵⁸

57 Opinion of the Soviet Ambassador in Budapest, Ivan Aboimov, about Leonid Kravchuk’s visit to Hungary and the Hungarian-Ukrainian joint statement, May 29, 1991. *Iratok az Antall-kormány külpolitikájához*, op. cit. 293-294.

58 Quoted by Renáta PALÁDI, *Magyar-ukrán kétoldalú kapcsolatépítés*, op. cit.

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In fact, just two days before the meeting, the Ukrainians initiated an amendment in which they sought to withdraw their previous content to the recognition of national minorities' community-level rights. Naturally, this was turned down by the Hungarian side. A consular agreement also formed part of the treaties, which together clearly implied an intervention into Soviet domestic politics. Let us not forget that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary was still taking place at this time...

Finally, Ukrainian independence was legally declared. As the diplomatic historian János Sáringer points out, "Ukraine declared its independence on August 24, 1991, which was also confirmed by a referendum held on December 1. Hungary was among the first to establish diplomatic relations with the country (December 3, 1991), elevating its consulate in Kyiv to the rank of an embassy. On the day of signing the protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations, a pre-made sign was displayed on the wall of the former consulate, which resonated well with the Ukrainian public opinion. From the beginning, Kyiv saw Hungary as the county that assisted most in winning independence. Three days later, József Antall visited Ukraine upon the invitation of the President Leonid Kravchuk and signed the Hungarian-Ukrainian Basic Treaty."⁵⁹ Generally, when consider-

59 Sáringer, János, "Mozaikok a magyar–ukrán diplomáciai kapcsolatok 1991 és 1992 közötti történetéből" ['Mosaics from the History of Hungarian-Ukrainian Diplomatic Relations in 1991-1992'] *Külügyi Szemle* 4 (2021), 90.

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ing the order of countries recognizing Ukraine as an independent state, Poland is mentioned first, followed Canada, and Hungary in third place. However, the historian Csilla Fedinec argues that “the referendum took place on Sunday, December 1, 1991. The result was announced the next day, Monday. Tuesday noon, a facsimile arrived from Budapest, confirming that the protocol on establishing diplomatic relations is ready for signature. This took place the same afternoon in the Ukrainian capital, while the inscription plate was replaced. Minister of Foreign Affairs Anatolij Zlenko and high-ranking diplomats who were present *‘congratulated the Hungarian government on being the first to support the creation and strengthening of the independent state with its actions.’*”⁶⁰ In conclusion, we can say that Hungary indeed did everything it could and was the first among the first to take action for Ukrainian independence.

One factor of the December 1 referendum is its paramount significance in terms of the Transcarpathian population. In addition to the question on the country’s independence, voters also had to decide on whether to support a “special self-governing status” for the region being enshrined in the Ukrainian constitution and whether they approve of the establishment of a Hungarian Autonomous District within that.⁶¹

60 FEDINEC, Csilla, “Ukrajna helye Európában és a magyar-ukrán kapcsolatok két évtizede” [‘Ukraine’s Place in Europe and Two Decades of Hungarian-Ukrainian Relations’]. *Külügyi Szemle* 4 (2012), 104.

61 The latter question was phrased as follows: “Do you agree with the establishment of a Hungarian Autonomous Region in the area of the

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It is worth making a brief detour to explain the goals of the Transcarpathian community, led mostly by Hungarians and Ruthenians, and the state of affairs they sought to achieve. The answer is remarkably similar to the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, first achieved within the Soviet Union and then as part of Ukraine. But how did this work out in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea? It should be considered that the Soviet state was a makeshift structure of member republics; however, within certain member states so-called autonomous republics and autonomous regions also existed, such as the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic or the Kalmyk Autonomous Oblast. The Crimean Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic belonged to the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) until 1945, when the Crimean Tatars were driven out of the land by force. That year marked the end of the peninsula's status as an autonomous member republic; it subsequently became an *oblast* within the Russian member republic.⁶² Then, in 1954, Crimea was attached to the Ukrainian SSR. In 1991, Crimea successfully acquired – partially due to the fear of Ukrainian separatism – the status of an autonomous republic again prior to the announcement

Berehove raion?” BAYERNÉ SIPOS, Mónika, “A kisebbségi autonómia tervek szakaszai Kárpátalján 1989 után” [‘Phases of Plans for Minority Autonomy in Transcarpathia After 1989’]. *Köztes-Európa* 1 (2014), 18.

62 FEDINEC, Csilla, “Párhuzamos valóság – a krími tatár Mejlisz” [‘Parallel Reality: The Crimean Tatar Mejlis’]. *Új Egyenlítő* 2 (2014), 28-29.

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of Ukrainian independence, also confirmed by a referendum. The Crimeans managed to hold on to this autonomy once the state was freed of Soviet guardianship. By any means, this was not easy to achieve given that both Kyiv and Simferopol had different views on the depth and nature of the autonomy.⁶³ The ferocity of the debates and the determination of the opposing parties is well reflected by the fact that the Crimean parliament initiated the creation of a new constitution in 1994, even though it had no right to do so. Obviously, Ukrainians were determined to reject this attempt at drafting a constitution; to this end, President Leonid Kuchma even suspended Crimea's autonomous status for a short period and controlled the area himself by decree.⁶⁴ Finally, the two parties came to an agreement in 1998, when Kyiv gave in and accepted the Crimean constitution while stipulating that it must also be approved by the Ukrainian parliament. The Crimean constitution (and the region's extensive autonomy) remained in force until the secession of the province in 2014. However, it was a source of tension in many instances, not only within Ukraine but also in Ukrainian-Russian relations, including the issue of Russian citizenship of Crimean residents.

Turning back to our main topic, the population of Transcarpathia was seemingly united on the question of Ukrainian independence, with nearly 93 percent voting in

63 Ibid. 29.

64 SASSE, Gwendolyn, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) 177-179.

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favor. At the same time, they also approved (although by a slightly smaller margin) the special self-governing status of the Transcarpathian region, as well as the creation of an autonomous Hungarian area. Despite the referendum being valid, the final results were ignored by the Ukrainian government: when the regional council applied for the rights of Transcarpathia and Hungarian communities being granted in 1992, Kyiv reacted coldly. In addition, the Ukrainian parliament passed a law in 1992, stating that any act of violating Ukraine's territorial integrity can and will be punished. However, relevant passages on territorial autonomy cannot be found in neither the law on national minorities, adopted not long after, nor in the Ukrainian-Hungarian Basic Treaty or even in the new constitution.⁶⁵ The law on the national minorities, adopted in 1992, was created in the spirit of the new guidelines, and despite allowing concessions in many areas (e.g., the possibility of relatively wide use of mother tongue, restoration of place names), the right to establish public administration units for national minorities was removed from the final version.⁶⁶

65 Ibid.

66 Mihály Tóth, honorary chairman of the Hungarian Democratic Federation in Ukraine (UMDSZ) and former Member of Parliament, has pointed out that curiously enough, the amendment was initiated by two MPs representing Transcarpathia, one of whom was from the "Hungarian" constituency of Beregszász (Berehove). TÓTH, Mihály, "Kisebbségvédelmi jogalkotás és jogérvényesítés Ukrajnában. Egy új nemzetállam kisebbségpolitikájának tapasztalatai" ['Minority rights legislation and enforcement in Ukraine. Experiences of the minority policy of a new nation-state']. *Magyar Kisebbség - Nemzetpolitikai Szemle*, 1-22 (2009), 200.

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An important question arises: what did the Hungarian government do and what could it have possibly done in the face of this? As a matter of fact, not much. The derailment of the Ukrainian policy on national minorities, which started in a generous and tolerant spirit, seemingly confused Hungarian diplomacy, which failed to solve emerging problems adequately. On the other hand, the situation was extremely chaotic in the early 1990s. Before the declaration of Ukrainian independence, it was not clear whom the Hungarian side should negotiate with; moreover, the representation of interests of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community was still in its early stages. In spite of this, coordination between the government and local Hungarians would have been of fundamental importance; according to some opinions, this was frequently overlooked.⁶⁷ This explains how, for example, the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association received almost no information from the government during the long and complicated negotiations. Likewise, Transcarpathian Hungarians fighting for autonomy were unaware of the content of the finalized trea-

67 On the other hand, Csilla Fedinec seeks to disprove this claim. She suggests that “the basic treaty did not deal with the issue of autonomy mentioned verbally by Antall, but it did formulate guarantees regarding Transcarpathian Hungarians. Official documents from the period discredit the criticism suggesting that the treaty had been concluded behind the back of the Hungarians. In fact, the leaders of the most important Transcarpathian Hungarian organization, KMKSZ, attended multiple negotiations. By signing the contract, Hungary proved to the international community that it is not a conflict seeker, but on the contrary, acts as a stabilizing force in the region”. FEDINEC, *Ukrajna helye Európában*, op. cit. 105.

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ty.⁶⁸ At the same time, as mentioned earlier, the signing of the treaty went ahead on December 5, some days after the referendum.⁶⁹

Accordingly, the Hungarian government was right to believe that the Ukrainian side will take a positive stand on the autonomy initiative and continue what could be described as a liberal policy on nationalities.⁷¹ The Ukrainian and Hungarian versions of the basic treaty were unidentical; likewise, negotiations with the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association did not proceed entirely smoothly and autonomy was not included in the text.

In the aftermath, Hungary's amicable good neighborhood policy towards Ukraine continued tenaciously. Examples for this include the Hungarian Parliament's proposal on the commemoration of the victims of the Holodomor, an artificial famine in Soviet Ukraine, or when chlorine was sent from Budapest to Transcarpathia to avert difficulties in the supply of tap water. During the war, Hungary even signifi-

68 30 éve tartottak Kárpátalján népszámlálást és írták alá a magyar-ukrán alapszerződést. ['Thirty years ago, a referendum was held in Transcarpathia, and the Hungarian-Ukrainian treaty was signed']. *Karpat.in.ua*, URL: <https://politic.karpat.in.ua/?p=35395&lang=hu>. The above statement is from László Brenzovics, the current chairman of KMKSZ, who also mentioned in the interview that the special status was proposed to the Zakarpattia Obast assembly Leonid Kravchuk. However, such legal status did not exist at all; therefore, its success "was very doubtful from the beginning".

69 KERTÉSZ, Dávid, *A kárpátaljai népszavazás legendája* ['The Legend of the Transcarpathian Referendum'], *Pesti Srácok*, URL: <https://pestisracok.hu/a-karpataljai-nepszavazas-legendaja/>.

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cantly contributed to supplying Ukraine with diesel through an old Soviet military pipeline.

The chronological events listed in this book start roughly from the fall of the Soviet Union and span a period of over three decades.

The facts speak for themselves.

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1991

Immediately after the Ukraine declared independence, Hungary took friendly diplomatic steps towards the young state. For example, it was due to a Hungarian initiative that Ukraine was able to attend the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as a guest of Hungary. The conference lasted until the beginning of October.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1991 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN AGREEMENT AT THE MOSCOW MEETING

This morning, at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held Moscow, the Hungarian delegation had discussions with the representatives of the independent Ukrainian government, hitherto recognized only by Poland. The head of the Hungarian delegation agreed with the Ukrainian ambassador dispatched to Moscow that Ukraine will participate as Hungary's guest in the conference, which is to last until early October.

According to the news leaked from this afternoon's meeting, several delegations have already approved the Hungarians' initiative, from which political observers conclude that the number of countries participating in the Helsinki Process will soon – possibly even during the present meeting in Moscow – rise from 38 to 39.

Some of the diplomats attending the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe consider it natural that Hungary has taken on the semi-official role of introducing

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Ukraine to the meeting, as there is a significant Hungarian minority living in the Ukrainian region of Transcarpathia and the Budapest government is not indifferent to their situation.¹

OCTOBER 4, 1991 – TREATY ON UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS

During Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk's visit to Budapest, an agreement on Ukrainian-Hungarian relationships was signed, with the aim of emphasizing the necessity of stimulating economic relations between the two countries. The agreement indicated the expansion of direct contacts in a variety of sectors, including industry, construction, science, and technology. For this purpose, a permanent Ukrainian-Hungarian working committee was set up, and in order to settle finances and mutual accounts, a separate banking agreement was also signed.²

DECEMBER 3, 1991 – HUNGARIAN EMBASSY OPENS IN KYIV

Following Poland and Canada, Hungary was the third country to recognize Ukraine as an independent state.

1 MTI news archive, September 16, 1991.

2 MTI news archive, October 4, 1991.

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The protocol on establishing diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Hungary, signed on the same day, December 3, 1991, took immediate effect. Hence, Hungary was the first to form a diplomatic relationship with Ukraine after the restoration of its independence.

On the same day, Hungary was also the first country to open its embassy in the Ukrainian capital. At the ensuing press conference, Foreign Minister Zlenko repeatedly emphasized that the move is a natural and logical continuation of the process whereby direct connections have been established between the two sides, beginning far before Sunday's referendum. Ukraine highly values the fact that Hungary was among the first to recognize its independence. He expressed his hope that Budapest will develop its relations with Kyiv even more effectively in the future.³

DECEMBER 6, 1991 – BASIC TREATY ON FOUNDATIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND COOPERATION

On December 6, 1991, Ukraine and Hungary signed the so-called Basic Treaty on Foundations of Neighborhood and Cooperation, which includes passages on protecting minority rights and states that Hungary “does not have and will not have” any territorial claims against Ukraine. The treaty also

3 <https://hungary.mfa.gov.ua/hu/nagykovetseg/279-z-istoriji-polyystva-ukrajini-v-ugorshhini> (retrieved July 1, 2023); MTI news archive, December 3, 1991.

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contributed to the preservation of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of national minorities. Additionally, the two countries guaranteed that public bodies dealing with the affairs of national minorities will be created with the participation and in the interest of all nationalities living in the given area. The statement signed last year also ensured national minorities' right to study in their mother tongue at all levels of education. They agreed that Budapest and Kyiv would establish a joint committee for coordinating necessary practical measures. With its proposals on the active protection of minorities, the Hungarian-Ukrainian treaty has created a unique example for the Central and Eastern European region.⁴

⁴ <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=99500045.tv> (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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FEBRUARY 12, 1992 – UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN HOME AFFAIRS AGREEMENT

The agreement on cooperation between the internal affairs organizations of Hungary and Ukraine was signed in Kyiv on Wednesday. The agreement was signed by the Hungarian Minister of the Interior, Dr. Péter Boross, and his Ukrainian counterpart A. Vasylyshyn in representation of their respective countries. During the toast following the signing, Mr. Vasylyshyn emphasized that Hungary was the first state with which Ukraine concluded such an important and exemplary treaty.⁵

MARCH 24, 1992 – CEREMONIAL OPENING OF THE EMBASSY OF UKRAINE IN HUNGARY, THE COUNTRY'S FIRST DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION⁶

MARCH 24, 1992 – COOPERATION BETWEEN HUNGARIAN AND UKRAINIAN CIVIL DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS

A protocol on cooperation between Hungarian and Ukrainian civil defense organizations has been signed in Nyíregyháza.

5 MTI news archive, February 12, 1992.

6 <https://hungary.mfa.gov.ua/hu/nagykovetseg/279-z-istoriji-posolystva-ukrajini-v-ugorshhini> (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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To this end, it was recorded in the signed protocol that the two countries will work on the exchange of information in the future, and for this a direct radio connection is to be created. Additionally, in the event of possible flooding, the two countries will make joint efforts in flood defense and damage control. Parties also agreed that they will mutually provide shelter for Hungarian or Ukrainian residents evacuated from the endangered area, should such an event occur.⁷

APRIL 4, 1992 – JESZENSZKY VISITS BEREKSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE)

Hungarian Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky met with his Ukrainian colleague Anatoliy Zlenko in Beregszász (Berehove) on Saturday. During the meeting, timely issues relating to relations between the two countries were reviewed.⁸ At the press conference following negotiations, the two foreign ministers stated that the excellent relationship between Hungary and Ukraine could be of exemplary value for the countries of the Central and Eastern European region. Mr. Jeszenszky added that it would have a beneficial impact on Europe's crisis zones if the example of the Hungarian-Ukrainian cooperation became the dominant model in those areas. He also noted that the exemplarily good relationship between the two countries is not arranged with the

7 MTI news archive, March 24, 1992.

8 MTI news archive, April 4, 1992.

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exclusion of the Hungarian minority living in Transcarpathia; instead, it is delivered through them. Answering a question related to this topic, Mr. Zlenko emphasized that the government of Ukraine will do everything it can to ensure that the rights of national minorities living on its territory will not be impaired in the future. At the press conference, it was announced that negotiators adopted two documents following their meetings at Beregszász (Berehove) and Nyíregyháza. In the first, the results of negotiations were summarized, while the second contains a joint declaration on respecting human and minority rights.⁹

APRIL 29, 1992 – HUNGARY LEADS UKRAINE INTO THE GLOBAL SOCCER SCENE

Hungary not only became the first opponent of the Ukrainian national team but also provided valuable assistance in establishing the football association of the neighboring country. At the beginning of 1992, a delegation led by Viktor Bannikov, president of the newly formed Ukrainian Football Federation, arrived in Hungary to closely study the operation of the Hungarian Football Federation, then under the leadership of Mihály Laczkó. As a result of the developing relationship, the idea of a match between the two national teams was born.

⁹ MTI news archive, April 4, 1992.

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Zoltán Magyar has earned timeless merits for the organization of the historic event. Mr. Magyar, who was the former department director of Ferencváros, at that time manager of the U21 national team, and later known as the manager of the Hungarian Olympic and national teams, is currently the coach of the Hungarian parliamentary national team. Familywise tied to Transcarpathia in many ways – for example, his mother was born in Beregszász (Berehove) –, he suggested that Viktor Bannikov not to play Ukraine’s first historic match with Canada (the idea of the Northern American country was brought up by the Ukrainian Federation given the large Ukrainian emigrants living there), but rather with Hungary, that has already proven its friendly approach toward its new neighbor in many ways and wished to strengthen the relationship with this match too. Furthermore, Mr. Magyar also initiated that the match should take place in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), Transcarpathia, instead of Kyiv, where almost two thousand Hungarians lived. “We are not even playing abroad,” stated *Nemzeti Sport* in its title.

Even though the venue, the Avanhard Stadium, was a rather battered facility at the time, but the choice turned out to be a hit, 15-16 thousand fans crowded the 12,000-seat stadium. “An idealistic, paradisiacal state ruled the stadium, perhaps there were more Hungarian flags than Ukrainian, but that wasn’t the point, everyone loved everyone,” recalled Zoltán Magyar.¹⁰

10 *Nemzeti Sport*, April 29, 2022; available online at: https://www.nemzetisport.hu/magyar_valogatott/30-eve-magyarorszag-vezette-ki-ukrajnat-a-vilag-futballszinpadara-2889419 (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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MAY 21, 1992 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN PRIME MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

Hungarian-Ukrainian prime ministerial meetings took place in the Hungarian Parliament. Hungarian Prime Minister József Antall emphasized that his country strives for amicable relations with all countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States; however, it is no secret that Budapest prioritizes its relationship with Ukraine. When building relationships, Hungary attaches significant importance to the legal protection of national minorities. It is particularly satisfying that a relevant passage was included in the Hungarian-Ukrainian basic treaty. The situation of the Transcarpathian Hungarians is a positive example in handling the issue of national minorities. In this regard, Mr. Antall suggested that the creation of some sort of autonomy in the areas populated by ethnic Hungarians should be considered. In response, his Ukrainian counterpart Vitold Fokin said that Kyiv would like to see Hungary become a bridge between Ukraine and the European Community. As for the Hungarian national minority, its members are not disadvantaged in any way in Ukraine, he added. The Prime Minister deemed József Antall's proposal on autonomy worthy of consideration, but noted that creating new, dividing borders would quite be in alignment with the unifying Europe.¹¹

11 MTI news archive, May 21, 1992.

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JULY 3, 1992 – GÖNCZ-PLYUSHCH MEETING

Hungarian President Árpád Göncz met with Ivan Plyushch, Chairman of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine. The President of Hungary said that from the Hungarian point of view, it is important that Ukraine gets more involved in European cooperation and takes part in as many joint programs as possible. Mr. Plyushch recalled that the fact that Hungary was the first country to express its sympathy for the democratic changes in Ukraine will not be forgotten in his country.¹²

JULY 24, 1992 – MEETING OF THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE ON MINORITIES

The Hungarian-Ukrainian joint committee on minorities has convened its first meeting. Delegations attending the meeting also included representatives of Ukrainians living in Hungary and members of the ethnic Hungarian community in Ukraine.¹³ It was decided that Ukraine and Hungary will also cooperate in the Council of Europe, where Hungary is a full member and Ukraine holds observer status. Furthermore, Budapest expects Ukraine to participate in the cooperation on minorities within the framework of the Central European Initiative. Recommendations will also be submitted to the two countries' governments on facilitating smoother border crossings.¹⁴

12 MTI news archive, July 3, 1992.

13 MTI news archive, July 24, 1992.

14 MTI news archive, July 28, 1992.

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FEBRUARY 26, 1993 – GÖNCZ-KRAVCHUK MEETING

Árpád Göncz highlighted the importance of the Ukrainian law on national minorities and the appended presidential executive order. Among other things, these laws enable the use of Hungarian place names and symbols. This type of approach towards minority rights is exemplary in Europe, the Hungarian head of state indicated. Mr. Göncz also confirmed that a firm connection between Ukraine and Europe is in Hungary's interests. The two presidents briefly touched on Hungarian-Ukrainian economic cooperation, which Mr. Göncz described as exemplary in many areas. The Hungarian President also noted that regarding the settlement of former Soviet debts, Budapest accepts the agreement between Russia and Ukraine.¹⁵

FEBRUARY 26, 1993 – ANTALL-KRAVCHUK MEETING

An agreement was reached on the simplified border crossing of residents of border counties and the opening of new border crossing points. A so-called readmission agreement, establishing the order of repatriating border illegal border crossers, was also signed. Likewise, a proposal on coopera-

¹⁵ MTI news archive, February 26, 1993.

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tion between the Hungarian and Ukrainian Ministries of Agriculture was also approved. Additionally, Budapest indicated its support for Ukraine's involvement in various regional and subregional initiatives.¹⁶

APRIL 19, 1993 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS

The first official meeting of the intergovernmental joint committee in Kyiv ended on Monday with the signing of the protocol on the Hungarian-Ukrainian economic [and] trade framework and the document recording this year's goods turnover. At the early evening press conference, both Hungarian Minister for Foreign Trade Béla Kádár and Ivan Hertz, his Ukrainian host and counterpart, said that Ukraine has set an example among former socialist countries by making the most progress in restoring and developing economic relations with Hungary. This is indicated by the fact that currently close to a hundred joint ventures have been formed and the capital invested in Ukraine by Hungarian companies exceeds 12 million dollars. Accordingly, Kyiv counts on Hungarian business participation primarily in the areas of agricultural processing, infrastructural investments, and the transformation of the defense industry to serve peaceful means.¹⁷

16 MTI new archive, February 26, 1993.

17 MTI news archive, April 19, 1993.

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MAY 11, 1993 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN BASIC TREATY

On Tuesday after 7 pm, the Hungarian National Assembly began a roll-call vote on the proposal submitted to the Parliament in conformation of the agreement signed in Kyiv on December 6, 1991, between the Republic of Hungary and Ukraine on the foundations of good neighborly relations and cooperation.

Prior to this, Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky and later Prime Minister József Antall responded to issues raised during the two-day debate. The Prime Minister emphasized that he upholds the treaty that he signed in the interest of Hungarian foreign policy and Hungarian communities living beyond the country's borders. Mr. Antall addressed Hungary's foreign policy over the past few years, recalling the unique diplomatic successes that the country achieved in its relationships with the successor states following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Significant progress had been made in improving the situation of the Hungarian minority living in Ukraine. The Prime Minister stated that the most controversial sentence was included in the treaty because there had been no similar agreement on this issue between the sovereign Ukraine and Hungary before.

In the Hungarian-Ukrainian Basic Treaty, the two parties commit themselves to develop their relations in a spirit of mutual friendship. When building these relations, they are to adhere to the norms put forth in international documents, such as sovereign equality, refraining from the use of force, the inviolability of borders, territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes, equality of nations, and the

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principle of good neighborliness. According to Paragraph 2 of the Basic Treaty, Budapest and Kyiv commit themselves to resolving any disputes exclusively through peaceful means. They will never, under any circumstances, use armed force against each other. They respect each other's territorial integrity and declare that they have no territorial claims against each other, nor will they have any in the future.

Following the usual pattern of security policy-related articles in interstate treaties, the Hungarian-Ukrainian Basic Treaty also includes a commitment that the parties will not allow their territory to be used by others for the purpose of carrying out armed aggression or hostile activities against the contracting partner.

According to Article 6, the contracting parties actively promote both nuclear and conventional disarmament, as well as further restrictions on European armed forces and armaments; moreover, they encourage measures on bilateral and multilateral confidence and security-building.

Budapest and Kyiv are to expand their cooperation in various international organizations, and Hungary also supports Ukraine's full participation in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other European bodies as soon as possible.

The Basic Treaty also regulates the order of regular contact; accordingly, meetings are to be held once a year at the highest level; foreign ministers are to hold regular consultations; in addition, frequent meetings of regional and local governments should strengthen the relationship. Besides, Budapest and Kyiv also encourage cross-border cooperation.

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In terms of economic cooperation, the basic treaty states that they wish to provide favorable conditions for entrepreneurs, encourage mutual investment, and refrain from discriminatory measures against each other. Article 17 of the Basic Treaty is particularly valuable for Hungary. In this, Kyiv and Budapest established the common position that peace, justice, stability, and democracy require mutual protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of national minorities. In order to ensure this, all necessary conditions must be provided.¹⁸

JUNE 24, 1993 – MEETING OF THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE ON MINORITY AFFAIRS

The two-day meeting of the Hungarian-Ukrainian joint committee on minority affairs ended on Thursday in Nyíregyháza. Following the negotiations, the leaders of the delegations, Géza Entz, Deputy State Secretary and chairman of the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, and Nikolay Makarevych, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, emphasized at a press conference that the two countries are successfully cooperating to further improve the situation of minorities and are aiming to strengthen their relations.

They announced that an agreement has been reached on the bilateral improvement of the technical conditions of the

¹⁸ MTI news archive, May 11, 1993.

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Hungarian theater's operation in Beregszász (Berehove), as well as on the training of actors in Hungary. Furthermore, the joint committee supports the creation of a self-supervisory institution network for Hungarian-language schools in Transcarpathia, as well as finding a solution to the supply of school textbooks. Steps will also be made to establish a Transcarpathian branch of the Faculty of Agriculture at the College of Nyíregyháza. Additionally, the committee also calls for the opening of a Hungarian-language library in Beregszász (Berehove). Hungary also offers a loan of 60 million HUF to complete the construction of the hospital in the town, which is home to a large Hungarian community. Plans include the facilitation of border crossings and the opening two new border stations between Kispalád (Hungary) and Nagypalád (Velyka Palad, Ukraine), as well as between Győröcske and Tizzasalamon (Solomonovo, Ukraine). During negotiations, the establishment of special economic zones on both sides of the border was also discussed, in the hope of further improving future economic cooperation.

The first Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine confirmed that preparations are underway for the opening of Ukraine's consulate in Nyíregyháza. Nikolay Makarevych expressed his appreciation for the introduction of Ukrainian language education in Hungary, the establishment of language departments at high schools in Baktalórántháza and Csenger, as well as the creation of a Ukrainian Department at the Bessenyei György Teacher Training College in Nyíregyháza.¹⁹

19 MTI news archive, June 24, 1993.

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1994

JANUARY 31, 1994 – ZLENKO: KYIV WILL SOON JOIN THE PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

Ukraine will be joining the “Partnership for Peace” initiative in the near future, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatoliy Zlenko announced together with his Hungarian colleague Géza Jeszenszky at a joint press conference in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) on Monday, according to an Interfax report.

Mr. Zlenko believes that the partnership has a promising future and Ukraine will not only participate in the preparation of the program but also take part in its operation. According to the news agency, Mr. Jeszenszky stated that Hungary fully supports the Ukrainian position within the program.²⁰

FEBRUARY 17, 1994 – INTERVIEW WITH PÉTER BOROSS – LE FIGARO – ITAR-TASS

The Russian news agency ITAR-TASS reports on the main points of the statement made by the Hungarian Prime Minister in Thursday’s issue of the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro*.

In first place, the Russian news agency highlights Hungarian Prime Minister Péter Boross’ statement regarding

20 MTI news archive, January 31, 1994.

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Hungary's NATO membership. According to Mr. Boross, his country cannot feel secure until it joins the Atlantic Alliance as a full member. In connection with Western concerns regarding the Russian-Ukrainian relations in the Crimean Peninsula, the Hungarian Prime Minister noted that Ukraine's independence must be defended at all costs.²¹

APRIL 5, 1994 – THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN AGREEMENT

Ministers of Foreign Trade Béla Kádár and Oleg Shlepitsev have signed this year's goods transportation protocol. The Ukrainian minister thanked Hungary for providing a \$1 million loan for the reconstruction of the hospital in Beregszász (Berehove) in return for shipments of goods in the future.²²

APRIL 15, 1994 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE ON MINORITIES – PRESS CONFERENCE

Géza Entz, chairman of the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, highlighted at a press conference on Friday that the document adopted could serve as an example for our relations with other countries as well.

Based on the latest meeting, the two parties propose that their governments should ensure the national-cultural autonomy of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine and the

21 MTI news archive, February 17, 1994.

22 MTI news archive, April 5, 1994.

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Ukrainian minority in Hungary. They also suggest that the governments should take appropriate measures against administrative, economic, and other attempts that are aimed at the assimilation of minorities or at the change of the demographic composition of areas inhabited by national minorities. Furthermore, they recommend that the two ministries of culture should enter into a cooperation agreement in the field of education. In order to improve the conditions of education in Hungarian language, a separate unit within the educational department of the county administration should be created with the participation of Hungarian national minority organizations to supervise Hungarian-language schools in Transcarpathia. They also suggest that the two countries' ministries of culture should set up a joint committee by the end of May to prepare history and geography textbooks for schools; likewise, a committee should make recommendations for the use of Hungarian textbooks in Ukraine. Additionally, the committee also proposes that a Hungarian-language higher education institution should be established in Beregszász (Berehove) for training teachers and preschool teachers. According to Mr. Entz, the institution can begin its operation with as few as 30-40 students. The committee also proposes that a class should be launched for Hungarian-speaking students at the Kyiv Institute of Theater Arts from next fall. Additionally, the body recommends recommend monthly airtime for programs aimed at Ukrainians living in Hungary on Hungarian Radio and Television.²³

23 MTI news archive, April 15, 1994.

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SEPTEMBER 26, 1994 – ÁRPÁD GÖNCZ WELCOMES OLEKSANDR MOROZ, CHAIRMAN OF THE *VERKHOVNA RADA* OF UKRAINE

The high-ranking Ukrainian guest has expressed gratitude for the Hungarian initiative to provide holiday opportunities in Hungary for Ukrainian children who suffered health problems due to the Chernobyl disaster.²⁴

DECEMBER 4, 1994 – OSCE – GÖNCZ-KUCHMA MEETING

Árpád Göncz, the President of Hungary, welcomed President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma in his office. The President of Hungary expressed his best wishes to his Ukrainian colleague on the occasion of his country's accession to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and also spoke of his delight that the memorandum containing the guarantees to be provided to Ukraine will be signed in Budapest. After the meeting, the President said that it is an honor that the document will be signed in Budapest, and he felt that Hungary also had a role to play in this. According to spokesman András Faragó, the Hungarian President pointed out that the mentioned agreement contributes greatly to the stabilization of Ukraine and Central Europe.²⁵

24 MTI news archive, September 26, 1994.

25 MTI news archive, December 4, 1994.

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1995

MARCH 14, 1995 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN PARLIAMENTARY NEGOTIATIONS

The chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament has accepted the Hungarian proposal to develop parliamentary relations between the two countries through specialist committees. Oleksandr Moroz confirmed this in a letter addressed to his Hungarian counterpart Zoltán Gál, which he handed over to the Hungarian parliamentary delegation during their visit to Kyiv on Tuesday.

Socialist MP András Csiha, a member of the parliamentary committee on local governments and the police and leader of the Hungarian delegation, told MTI that committees will be established for foreign affairs, agriculture, as well as minority and human rights. Mr. Csiha, who is also the president of the recently established Hungarian-Ukrainian section of the Hungarian group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), announced at a press conference on Tuesday that Hungary will officially propose to start preparations for Ukraine's accession at the upcoming IPU meeting in Madrid. They also discussed the possibility of Hungary acting as a mediator in accelerating negotiations between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Ukraine, as Ukraine is not yet a member of this organization, although its accession is imminent. After the negotiations, the Hungarian delegation donated office equipment worth \$5,000 to the Ukrainian parliament. On top of computers, the Hun-

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garian delegation also handed over a software presenting the Hungarian legislative practice.²⁶

MARCH 28, 1995 – GYULA HORN WELCOMES MYKOLA SHULHA

On Tuesday, March 28, 1995, Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn welcomed Mykola Oleksandrovysh Shulha, Minister of National Minorities, Migration and Religious Affairs of Ukraine, in his office. Mr. Shulha was in Budapest to attend the 5th session of the Hungarian-Ukrainian joint committee. After the meeting, the Ukrainian politician told the press that he discussed political issues related to minority protection with the Hungarian Prime Minister. According to Mr. Shulha, cooperation between Hungary and Ukraine has been on the right path since the signing of the Hungarian-Ukrainian Basic Treaty in 1991. Likewise, he believes that the minority protection provisions contained in the treaty have held up well in practice. This is also confirmed by that fact that the UN and the Council of Europe have since also adopted similar documents on ethnic minority matters. Additionally, The Ukrainian politician saluted the signing of the basic treaty between Hungary and Slovakia. According to his recollection, him and Prime Minister Horn did not only discuss general minority issues but also touched on topics related to education and culture.²⁷

26 MTI news archive, March 14, 1995.

27 MTI news archive, March 28, 1995.

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MARCH 29, 1995 – THE 5TH MEETING OF THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMISSION ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

Minister Mykola Shulga stated that as a multiethnic country, Ukraine aims to achieve integration while taking multiculturalism into account. The government in Kyiv intends to ensure the right of identity for all ethnic groups, including country's 164,000 Hungarians. The protocol records that Hungary will support Ukraine's accession to the Council of Europe.

The committee proposed further recommendations on education, culture, as well as other areas. The parties are obliged to ensure the right of national-cultural autonomy for minorities and prevent disadvantageous changes in ethnic composition in areas inhabited by national minorities. Additionally, the Ukrainian government must ensure the completion of the construction of the hospital in Beregszász (Berehove).²⁸

APRIL 4, 1995 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Hungarian Minister of Education Gábor Fodor signed cultural, educational, and scientific agreements on Tuesday in Kyiv. Despite its limited financial resources, the government supports research in Hungarian studies taking place

28 MTI news archive, March 29, 1995.

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in Ukraine and *vice versa*. The cabinet also strives for progress being made in the field of professional exchange programs and scholarships, and wishes to make gains in the modernization of history textbooks.²⁹

APRIL 26, 1995 – GYULA HORN DELIVERS SPEECH IN STRASBOURG

With regard to the further development of the international organization, the Hungarian Prime Minister highlighted his country's view the principle of anticipated trust should be applied in relation to the admission of Russia and Ukraine. This would naturally also imply the increased monitoring of their obligations.³⁰

MAY 19, 1995 – HORN ON HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS

With regard to Hungarian minority, Gyula Horn stated that the Hungarian government continues to consider the support of the Hungarians living in Ukraine important. He announced that under the current agreement, the issue of the Hungarian hospital in Beregszász (Berehove) will be resolved and the educational opportunities of the Hungarian community in Ukraine will undergo improvement.³¹

29 MTI news archive, April 4, 1995.

30 MTI news archive, April 26, 1995.

31 MTI news archive, May 19, 1995.

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SEPTEMBER 29, 1995 – FIRST MEETING OF THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE IN DEBRECEN

On Friday, members of the Hungarian-Ukrainian interparliamentary committee convened in Debrecen to discuss the tasks awaiting the parliaments of the two countries regarding the minority protection agreement and the basic treaty between Hungary and Ukraine. The Ukrainian negotiating team mentioned that they are studying the creation minority self-governments while in Hungary as the Ukrainian legal system does not yet provide an opportunity for their establishment. Presumably, based on the Hungarian example, the committee will propose the creation of similar minority self-governments adapted to local specifics in Ukraine.³²

OCTOBER 23, 1995 – SUNDAY'S AGENDA: ÁRPÁD GÖNCZ – LEONID KUCHMA NEGOTIATIONS

The meeting held on Sunday between Hungarian President Árpád Göncz and Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma in New York mainly focused on infrastructural investments serving common interests and on expanding agricultural cooperation. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the UN, Leonid Kuchma expressed his gratitude for Hungary's support in Ukraine's integration

32 MTI news archive, September 29, 1995.

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into European institutions during a discussion held on the sidelines of the memorial event. President Göncz indicated that Kyiv can continue to count on Hungarian assistance in the future as it is also in Hungary's interest for Ukraine to be linked to European integration as closely as possible.

Mr. Göncz drew the attention of his Ukrainian partner to the development of infrastructure between the two countries, specifically the construction works of the M3 motorway and the Tisza bridge, emphasizing that the implementation of these investments also serves Kyiv's interests. The President requested Leonid Kuchma that the Ukrainian government take further concrete steps regarding the construction of the hospital in Beregszász (Berehove). The issue of recognizing the degrees obtained at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Beregszász (Berehove) was also raised. Árpád Göncz indicated that academic staff at the teacher training college in Nyíregyháza provide all professional and human assistance required by the institution. The Ukrainian president pledged to personally follow up on these issues.³³

33 MTI news archive, October 23, 1995.

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1996

APRIL 3, 1996 – ESTABLISHMENT OF A HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE

The Hungarian subcommittee of the Hungarian-Ukrainian interparliamentary committee on economic affairs has been formed.³⁴

JUNE 11, 1996 – MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON MINORITY AFFAIRS IN KYIV

Several members of the Ukrainian government have promised to grant an operating license to the Hungarian College of Higher Education in Beregszász (Berehove) before the start of the new school year. The issue of accreditation has been dragging on for two years now. The parties also agreed to jointly celebrate the 1100th anniversary of the Hungarian conquest in both Kyiv and at the Verecke (Veretskyi) Pass. Budapest and Kyiv will connect the fifth anniversary of Ukraine's independence and the millennial anniversary not through an intergovernmental initiative but through a civil organization.

Hungarian State Secretary Csaba Tabajdi expressed his gratitude for Ukraine's openness regarding the development

34 MTI news archive, April 3, 1996.

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of Hungarian-language education in Transcarpathia. Volodymyr Yevtukh, Minister for Nationalities and Migration of Ukraine, promised that the branch of the Transcarpathian training institute in Beregszász (Berehove) will have greater autonomy and that a separate department within the county administration's public education department will deal with Hungarian-language education.³⁵

JUNE 13, 1996 – DECISION OF THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AGENCY OF UKRAINE

On June 13, 1996, the National Accreditation Agency of Ukraine arrived at a positive decision on granting the operating license of the college. The license, permitting educational activity, was issued by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education on September 16. (Before the June meeting of the Ukrainian-Hungarian joint committee on minorities, the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association was able to put two important issues on the agenda through the use of media in relation to the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia: the construction of a monument to the Hungarian Conquest- at the Verecke [Veretskyi] Pass and the issue of registering the college. The committee made a decision in favor of the latter.)³⁶

35 MTI news archive, June 11, 1996.

36 <https://kmf.uz.ua/hu/a-foiskola-tortenetebol/1993-2004/> (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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SEPTEMBER 25, 1996 – COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY OF THE TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

On September 25, 1996, the Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education held its commencement ceremony ahead of the academic year. The ceremony was attended by Bálint Magyar, Hungarian Minister of Education and Anatoly Babak, Deputy Minister of Education of Ukraine, as well as leaders of the Transcarpathian county and higher education institutions, many of whom previously opposed the opening of the institution. The recruitment of academic staff has begun, including lecturers from Transcarpathia with relevant degrees or suitable professional experience and qualifications, as well as young people studying in doctoral schools or pursuing postgraduate studies. Education took place in the building of the Vocational School for Tailoring in Beregszász (Berehove).³⁷

NOVEMBER 14, 1996 – KUCHMA-GÖNCZ DISCUSSIONS HELD IN KYIV

Both the Ukrainian President and Foreign Minister stated that joining Euro-Atlantic integration is also in the strategic interest of Ukraine. On the other hand, the country also

³⁷ <https://kmf.uz.ua/hu/a-foiskola-tortenetebol/1993-2004/> (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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aims to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relationships within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The Hungarian side also stated that the country is maintaining its interest in the bilateral development of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations, in political, economic, cultural, and other aspects alike.³⁸

NOVEMBER 15, 1996 – ÁRPÁD GÖNCZ HOLDS MEETINGS IN KYIV

On the second day of his official visit to Ukraine, Árpád Göncz had a brief meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko on Friday. During breakfast with Udovenko, the President stated that stability in the Central European region cannot be achieved without Ukraine; therefore, Budapest is seeking to establish a strategic partnership with Kyiv.

Mr. Udovenko expressed gratitude for Hungary's support for Ukraine's membership in the European Council and its assistance in the country's accession to the Central European Initiative. He requested that Budapest stands behind Kyiv in obtaining CEFTA membership too. President Göncz assured his partner that Hungary supports Ukraine's accession to GATT/WTO, which is one of the conditions of the CEFTA membership.³⁹

38 MTI news archive, November 14, 1996.

39 MTI news archive, November 15, 1996.

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DECEMBER 5, 1996 – IMRE MÉCS IN KYIV: ON UKRAINE'S SECURITY AND THE NATO EXPANSION

Imre Mécs, Chairman of the Hungarian parliamentary committee on national defense, said that the talks were largely dominated by the issues of European security and the expansion of the NATO. The Ukrainian leaders consider it possible and favorable to establish a special cooperation with NATO, similar to the one with Russia, but tailored to Ukraine's needs – which, according to Imre Mécs, is a remarkable proposal. Ukraine will gradually accept the fact that a European security system is emerging in which NATO plays a central role. Mr. Mécs added that Hungary would appreciate if Ukraine could join the ranks of NATO members as a result of mutual compliance. Not only do we not have any objections, but we would specifically encourage this. However, the reality of this is extremely unlikely today, he pointed out. According to the chairman of the defense committee, neither the Ukrainian-Hungarian military cooperation nor the basic treaty between the two countries needs to be fundamentally revised when Hungary becomes a NATO member.⁴⁰

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MTI news archive, December 5, 1996.

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JANUARY 14, 1997 – PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY LÁSZLÓ KOVÁCS
AND HENNADIY UDOVENKO

Ukraine respects Hungary's right to become a NATO member state. Hungarian Foreign Minister László Kovács indicated that according to the spirit and the content of the basic treaty, the two countries strive for good relations in all areas with each other. Both Hungary and Ukraine aim to ensure that Hungarian minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minority in Hungary find happiness, culture, and identity in accordance with the minority protection agreement, he said. During the talks, László Kovács suggested that he and his Ukrainian colleague jointly seek a solution to the issue of the Verecke (Veretskyi) Pass monument. "We agreed that the issue has had no impact the relationship between the two countries, and with mutual goodwill, a solution could be found," he added. Mr. Kovács emphasized that Hungary supports Ukraine's accession to CEFTA, and it is in the Hungarian interest for Ukraine to establish a special partnership with the NATO and the European Union.

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister expressed his gratitude for Hungary's support for Ukraine's accession to the Council of Europe and the Central European Initiative. He recalled that Budapest was also the host of the 1994 OSCE summit, at which the five nuclear powers gave guarantees for Ukrainian independence.⁴¹

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JANUARY 15, 1997 – UKRAINIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HENNADIY UDOVENKO VISITS THE HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The director of the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs stated that Mr. Udoenko has referred to the Hungarian-Ukrainian relations as excellent. The Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasized that he considers it natural for Hungary and its neighbors to join NATO. However, Ukraine – which voluntarily gave up its nuclear weapons – would “find it hard” to accept if the North Atlantic organization were to deploy nuclear weapons in the Central and Eastern European region.⁴²

JANUARY 15, 1997 – MEETING BETWEEN CSABA TABAJDI AND VOLODYMYR YEVТУKH

According to plans, the headquarters of the Federation of Ukrainians in Hungary will open in Budapest this April. The agreement was reached at the meeting on Wednesday when Hungarian State Secretary Csaba Tabajdi met with Volodymyr Yevtukh, chairman of the Ukrainian state commission on nationality and migration affairs, who was accompanying the Ukrainian Foreign Minister during his visit to Hungary.

41 MTI news archive, January 14, 1997.

42 MTI news archive, January 15, 1997.

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They also considered it significant that after a long wait, the Hungarian-language teacher training college in Transcarpathia has finally received permission to operate. In addition, they also discussed the unresolved issues related to the Illyés Gyula Hungarian National Theater in Beregszász (Berehove). The two politicians agreed that for Hungarians living in Transcarpathia, it is equally important to acquire proficiency in both the Hungarian and the Ukrainian languages. However, there was some controversy regarding issues related to education in mother tongue, as well as higher education admissions. During the meeting, Mr. Yevtukh pledged that Hungarian-language radio and television broadcasts in Transcarpathia will not be reduced in the future. Furthermore, he pointed out that the Hungarian-language teachers training college could become a Hungarian cultural center in the future. Overall, the two politicians considered the Hungarian-Ukrainian relations good in terms of minority issues; however, they acknowledged that there are unresolved problems primarily related to financing.⁴³

APRIL 4, 1997 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE
HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE

On Thursday and Friday, the Ukrainian section of the Hungarian-Ukrainian interparliamentary committee on the

43 MTI news archive, January 15, 1997.

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rights of national minorities inquired about the situation of national minorities in Hungary and the implementation of the Hungarian law on national and ethnic minority groups. The delegation visiting Hungary is led by Serhii Kivalov.

According to Mr. Kivalov, the Ukrainian co-chairman of the committee assuring minority rights, the delegation primarily gathered information about how the practical application of the Hungarian minority law actually meets the needs of the national minorities in Hungary, stressing his satisfaction with the result. Mr. Kivalov expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government for the support it provided to the cultural association of the small Ukrainian minority in Hungary. He stated that the Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center, built with a HUF 25 million grant, will open later during the month-

Mr. Kivalov claimed that during the visit, the group also aimed to gather information on how the minority self-government mechanism in Hungary could be used in Ukraine for the benefit of the Hungarian minority, numbering 200,000 people, and the ethnic Romanian community.

In response to a question, Mr. Kivalov also said that according to his knowledge, Hungarian-speaking high school students in Ukraine – who take their high school leaving examinations in their mother tongue – will not have to take their final exams in Ukrainian in the future. According to his statement, it is currently mandatory in Ukraine to take higher education entrance exams in the Russian or Ukrainian languages; however, he expressed hope that it will soon be possible for students to take the exams in their mother tongue as well. The question will be brought

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before the Ukrainian parliament and will likely be discussed during the upcoming visit of Ukrainian Prime Minister Lazarenko to Hungary, he added.

Representing the Ukrainian section of the joint work-group, Andriy Mastytskyi, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine, said in response to a journalist's question that the current Ukrainian government will not join the recent Russian-Belarusian agreement. Kyiv instead aims to join European integration organizations, he added.⁴⁴

MAY 15, 1997 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE:
PRESS CONFERENCE

In response to a question during the conference, the Ukrainian guests stated that the Hungarian public is not well informed about the situation of the national minority in Transcarpathia. They claimed that contrary to rumors, Hungarian-speaking students have been able to take their high school leaving exams in Hungarian for the past eighteen years and there are no plans to change this in the future either. The aim is to codify this right in law, they pointed out.⁴⁵

44 MTI news archive. April 4, 1997.

45 MTI news archive. May 15, 1997.

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NOVEMBER 11, 1997 -- THE UKRAINIAN PRIME MINISTER IN BUDAPEST

According to news reports, the Hungarian Prime Minister raised the issue during negotiations that the Ukrainian language law and educational concept currently under preparation would only allow Hungarian language education at the elementary level.

Hungary seeks to move forward with interregional cooperation, which is supported by the EU and several international organizations.

At the press conference following the signing ceremony, the Ukrainian Prime Minister claimed that the upcoming Ukrainian language and education laws will not be disadvantageous for the Hungarian minority. Valeriy Pustovoytenko believes that the proposed law is in line with treaties between Hungary and Ukraine; he pledged, however, that Kyiv will review the content of the draft document. As it is known, the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia believes that minority mother-tongue education is in danger in Ukraine. According to the draft law, this would be allowed only at elementary level in the future.⁴⁶

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MTI news archive. November 11, 1997.

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FEBRUARY 27, 1998 – THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR MINORITY LANGUAGES COMES INTO EFFECT

On Sunday, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages will come into effect in Hungary and several other countries on the continent, the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad informed MTI. An agreement was reached within the Council of Europe, signed by 18 countries and ratified by 7 states (including Hungary).

The aim of the agreement is to protect Europe's historical, regional, or minority languages. The protection applies to languages traditionally used in a given area of a country, spoken by smaller groups of people, and to languages that do not have official status.

The charter does not provide individual or collective rights, and its provisions do not extend to the protection of the languages of new immigrants. It primarily defines the goals and principles that the affected states must follow when creating their policies related to regional or minority languages.

The joining countries first must recognize the existence of the mentioned languages on their territory, and they are also obliged to respect the geographic area of the language in such a way that administrative boundaries should not hinder the use of the language. Furthermore, the use of the minority or regional languages is to be facilitated in both in private and public life, with special regard to preserving relationships between linguistic groups that are similar or

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different. Among neighboring countries, Austria, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, and Ukraine signed the charter.⁴⁷

MARCH 20, 1998 – MEMORIAL PLAQUE FOR HRYHORII SKOVORODA IN TOKAJ

In honor of the 275th anniversary of the birth of Ukrainian poet, philosopher and prominent humanist Hryhorii Skovoroda, a commemorative plaque was unveiled by the Ukrainian Cultural Association of Hungary and the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association in Tokaj on Friday.

The polyglot Hryhorii Skovoroda was among the best-educated figures of his time, having acquired broad knowledge during his youth in the great cities of Europe. The poet stayed in Tokaj between 1745 and 1750 as a member of the wine procurement committee commissioned by Empress Catherine the Great. Being well versed in music, he served as the cantor of the local Orthodox church, which is now a gallery. He also wrote several beautiful poems about his years in Hungary.

The congratulatory remarks of Árpád Göncz, President of Hungary, were read out by Sándor Petróczy, deputy chairman of the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, while President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma's words

47 MTI news archive. February 27, 1998.

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were delivered by Orest Klympush, Ambassador of Ukraine to Hungary.

Both presidents expressed in their letters that the inauguration event and the memorial plaque symbolize and foster the good neighborly relations between Hungary and Ukraine through national minorities living in the two countries.⁴⁸

APRIL 27, 1998 – THE UKRAINIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN BUDAPEST; ÁRPÁD GÖNCZ

Both Hungary and Ukraine aim to ensure respect for the identity of all national minorities, it was claimed at a meeting held between Árpád Göncz, President of Hungary, and Boris Tarasyuk, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on Monday in Budapest. According to presidential spokesman András Faragó, parties also discussed the proposed Ukrainian language law. President Göncz hopes that the upcoming legislation will be in line with the progressive traditions that have characterized minority protection in Ukraine in recent times.⁴⁹

48 MTI news archive. March 20, 1998.

49 MTI news archive, April 27, 1998.

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SEPTEMBER 25, 1998 – ZSOLT NÉMETH WELCOMES TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN LEADERS

Albeit with stricter regulations, Hungary intends to maintain visa-free travel with Ukraine even after joining the Schengen Agreement, the Political State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday said in a statement to journalists. On Friday, Zsolt Németh held talks with representatives of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association in Budapest. The meeting became relevant due to the planned visit of Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma to Budapest at the end of October. The Ukrainian and Hungarian foreign ministers are also expected to meet in mid-October.

The Hungarian side pledged to consult with the legitimate leaders of the Hungarian minority before any meetings with a representative of Ukraine.

At a press conference following the event, the association's chairman Miklós Kovács stated in response to an MTI question that although economic decline generally favors extremist views, there has no deterioration in the situation of minorities in Ukraine as of yet. He explained that Ukraine's economic situation has worsened not only because of the impact of the Russian crisis but also because state institutions are just as dysfunctional as their Russian counterparts.

Mr. Kovács pointed out the association's goal of unifying all Hungarian-language educational institutions under the same professional supervision and in a single school district. Zsolt Németh confirmed Hungary's support for the proposal.

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Additionally, the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs spoke of the common aim of opening the border crossing point at Beregsurány to international traffic, as well as the construction of a relief road around Beregszász (Berehove).⁵⁰

OCTOBER 11, 1998 – JÁNOS MARTONYI IN KYIV

Hungary intends to help Ukraine in every way to strengthen its Euro-Atlantic orientation. Hungary offers information, exchange of experience, and consultancy not only in European politics but also in internal economic policies, such as privatization, Hungarian foreign minister János Martonyi said on Sunday. The statement was made during a two-day working visit to Kyiv upon the invitation of his Ukrainian counterpart.

“We are not only interested in Ukraine being an independent and stable country, but also in it getting closer to us and to Europe through us,” Mr. Martonyi said.

The minister also told Ukrainian journalists that he will review all important aspects of bilateral relations with his partners. Drawing attention to the importance of symbolic steps, the head of the Hungarian diplomatic service noted that Ukraine is the first among the successor states of the Soviet Union that he pays a visit to as minister. This is to somewhat reciprocate the fact that the first foreign visit of

50 MTI news archive, September 25, 1998.

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his Ukrainian colleague Borys Tarasyuk led to Hungary in April.

According to Mr. Martonyi, it is particularly important for Hungary to strengthen its political, economic, and cultural connections with Ukraine in light of the Russian crisis.⁵¹

OCTOBER 26, 1998 – UKRAINIAN NEWSPAPER ON UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS

Extensive diplomatic negotiations have taken place between Ukraine and Hungary in recent years, but the future development of relations could be adversely affected by the fact that Ukraine is lagging behind its small western neighbor, particularly in terms of political and economic reforms. This is the key message of an article published in the Ukrainian weekly *Zerkalo Nedeli*, which examines the bilateral relationship in connection with the visit of Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma to Budapest on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The independent Ukrainian newspaper, considered the country's most unbiased publication, reminds its readers that after the Ukrainian independence referendum in 1991, Hungary was among the firsts to extend a hand of friendship to its neighbor. Since then, in the last eight years, more than fifty Ukrainian-Hungarian interstate agreements have been reached.

51 MTI news archive, October 11, 1998.

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The efficacy of bilateral cooperation is inevitably adversely affected by the fact that Hungary, having undergone a sweeping transformation and extensive reforms over the past decades, has joined several other Western-oriented Central European nations in moving away from Ukraine in the field of reforms, particularly economic transformation.

Although both Hungary and Ukraine are committed to European and Euro-Atlantic integration, Budapest has already broken the finish line in the “marathon” to the West, while Kyiv is still lagging several laps behind.

According to the newspaper, the bilateral relationship is politically problem-free, and Ukraine is fully satisfied with the new Hungarian government’s foreign policy efforts to establish Hungary as a stabilizing political factor in the Carpathian Basin, as well as a reliable partner for neighbors and the European Union.⁵²

OCTOBER 27, 1998 – THE UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT IN BUDAPEST – MEETING BETWEEN HEADS OF STATE

Ukraine wants Hungary to join NATO and the European Union as soon as possible, given this way it can provide more effective support to Ukraine, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma said during his discussion with Hungarian President Árpád Göncz in Budapest on Tuesday.

52 MTI news archive, October 26, 1998.

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The President emphasized that Hungary aims to become a member of the alliance before next April. He assured his Ukrainian colleague that Hungary, even as a NATO member, is ready to provide assistance to Ukraine in asserting its interests.

The Ukrainian party urged the preservation visa-free travel between the two countries even after Hungary's accession to the Schengen Zone. Mr. Göncz also highlighted that Hungary supports Ukraine's accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), adding that that Ukraine's participation in CEFTA could be the first step toward its European integration.

Leonid Kuchma suggested the establishment of a permanent platform for high-level political consultation between Hungary and Ukraine.

Additionally, Árpád Göncz stated that Hungary wishes to build a monument at the Verecke (Veretskyi) Pass in memory of the Hungarian Conquest. He suggested that the monument should be built as a joint Ukrainian-Hungarian venture. Mr. Göncz added that Hungary would like to see the monument completed by the millennium.⁵³

53 MTI news archive, October 27, 1998.

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OCTOBER 27, 1998 – THE UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT IN BUDAPEST:
ORBÁN, ÁDER; AGREEMENTS

Hungary does not plan to introduce visa requirements for Ukraine until it becomes a full member of the European Union. This was stated by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to President Leonid Kuchma at a lunch held in honor of the distinguished guest on Tuesday.

President Kuchma assured the Hungarian Prime Minister that he will not sign the law on minority language use if it discriminates against minorities.

At the meeting, Ukraine's accession to CEFTA was also discussed. Mr. Orbán claimed that CEFTA intends to accept countries that have an agreement with the European Union. (However, Ukraine is not an associated member of the EU.)

Mr. Kuchma also met with President of Hungary János Áder. The contents of the meeting have been shared with MTI by the press office of the Hungarian Parliament.

During the negotiations, the President of Ukraine expressed his appreciation for Hungary being among the first countries to recognize Ukrainian independence. He also thanked Hungary for providing all possible assistance to Ukraine's European integration. Besides, he briefed the President of Hungary on the operations of the Ukrainian parliament.

The members of the Ukrainian delegation and their Hungarian partners signed agreements on disaster management, animal health, military trust-building, cooperation between central election commissions and the mutual recognition of university degrees. Furthermore, parties signed

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a memorandum on the joint development concept of the border region between Hungary and Ukraine.⁵⁴

OCTOBER 27, 1998 – UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL VISIT IN BUDAPEST: PRESS CONFERENCE

The President of Hungary recalled that the country's first basic treaty was concluded with Ukraine. According to Árpád Göncz, Ukraine has fulfilled the obligations it undertook in the treaty related to the Hungarian minority issue.

President Göncz highlighted Hungary's goal of integrating Ukraine into CEFTA. Leonid Kuchma, who is making his first official visit to Hungary in his capacity as president, emphasized the importance of maintaining visa-free travel between the two countries.⁵⁵

OCTOBER 27, 1998 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN EQUIVALENCE AGREEMENT

On Tuesday, Hungarian Minister of Education Zoltán Pokorni and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk signed an agreement in Budapest on the mutual recognition of qualifications and academic degrees, the press office of the Ministry of Education informed MTI. The new agreement allows

54 MTI news archive, October 27, 1998.

55 MTI news archive, October 27, 1998.

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those who completed 11 years of school in Ukraine and wish to continue their studies in Hungary to start their studies in Hungarian higher education, after completing a one-year course at a Hungarian Language Institute in the neighboring country or in Hungary.⁵⁶

NOVEMBER 7, 1998 - FLOOD SITUATION: AID FOR TRANSCARPATIA

On Sunday morning, Gáspár Bodnár, technical deputy director of the Upper-Tisza Regional Environment and Water Directorate, ordered the immediate delivery of fifteen thousand sandbags to the flood-hit areas of Transcarpathia. The expert told an MTI correspondent that a catastrophic situation has developed in Transcarpathia. As is the case the Hungarian side, a relentless fight is taking place against flooding. Those taking part in the flood control effort are in constant contact with one another. Joint Hungarian-Ukrainian defense action is not uncommon, with Hungarians helping to reinforce dams on the Ukrainian side and Ukrainians working on the Hungarian territory. Mr. Bodnár pointed out that a large shipment of anti-flood sandbags had already been sent to the area on Friday, and the delivery of an additional 15,000 sandbags has now begun.⁵⁷

56 MTI news archive, October 27, 1998.

57 MTI news archive, November 7, 1998.

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NOVEMBER 7, 1998 – FLOOD SITUATION: TRANSCARPATHIANS EXPECTED AT NAGYHODOS

Transcarpathian refugees able to flee their homes only towards Hungary due to a further dam burst are expected to arrive at Nagyhodos, Colonel Sándor Istenes, head of the Civil Defense Command in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, to MTI on Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Istenes said that his team is adequately prepared to accommodate around four thousand people and have directed buses to the Hungarian-Ukrainian border at Nagyhodos. Two ambulances were also sent to Nagyhodos to provide immediate medical care to those in need.

Transcarpathian residents will be housed in Nyírbátor and the surrounding area, and the necessary measures have already been taken. Additional lodging capacity has also been arranged in Nyíregyháza, where up to 1,000 people can stay if necessary.⁵⁸

NOVEMBER 13, 1998 – FLOOD SITUATION: TRANSFER OF RELIEF SUPPLIES

The transfer of aid supplies sent to help flood victims in Transcarpathia is being carried out in an organized manner at the Hungarian-Ukrainian border, told Brigadier-General

58 MTI news archive, November 7, 1998.

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József Seres of the Hungarian Border Guard and Lieutenant Colonel and regional customs commander Colonel György Lupkovics told the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Defense Committee on Friday in Nyíregyháza.

Mr. Lupkovics, who is head of the customs office for Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties, said that 217 aid shipments have crossed the border so far.⁵⁹

59 MTI news archive, November 13, 1998.

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1999

MARCH 19, 1999 – BÉLA GYURICZA IN KYIV: FOREIGN AFFAIRS NEGOTIATIONS

Parties discussed the consequences of the fall flood disaster in Transcarpathia. State Secretary Gyuricza stated that following the assessment of damages, Hungary intends to support reconstruction efforts with approximately HUF 100 million. This is of great importance because the new NATO strategic concept includes the additional task of managing and planning civilian emergencies, with a focus on prevention, continuous information exchange and joint action.⁶⁰

MAY 7, 1999 – ISTVÁN STUMPF IN KYIV: NEGOTIATIONS, KOSOVO, FLOOD

Vasyl Durdynets, Minister of Extraordinary Situations of Ukraine who also welcomed Hungarian Minister of the Prime Minister's office during his Kyiv visit, expressed his gratitude for the prompt and effective Hungarian assistance in the aftermath of the flood damage in Transcarpathia, which he said was the most significant direct aid provided to the region.⁶¹

60 MTI news archive, March 19, 1999.

61 MTI news archive, May 7, 1999.

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SEPTEMBER 28, 1999 – UKRAINE: HONCHARUK AND OSIKA RECEIVE HUNGARIAN RECOGNITIONS

On Tuesday, the Hungarian Ambassador to Kyiv, János Kisfalvi, formally presented the Hungarian Order of Merit, Knight's Cross, to Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Trade Andriy Honcharuk and his predecessor, presidential advisor Serhiy Osika. The ceremony was held at the Hungarian embassy in Kyiv. Mr. Osika emphasized that Hungary provided assistance to Ukraine during its most difficult times.⁶²

DECEMBER 17, 1999 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE ON MINORITIES: PRESS CONFERENCE

Following the committee's meeting, Zsolt Németh, the Hungarian co-chairman of the Hungarian-Ukrainian Joint Committee on Minorities, stated at a press conference on Friday in Budapest that the principle of basing minority policy on cultural autonomy links the two countries' minority legislation.

He also highlighted that a center for coordinating Hungarian-language schools in Ukraine has been established, which Budapest hopes to be a harbinger of an independent Hungarian school district. He added that the language education of the Ukrainian minority in Hungary in public and higher education is equally important.

62 MTI news archive, September 28, 1999.

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Hungary is ready to sign a limited visa-free agreement with Ukraine and the Ukrainian proposal on the issue is currently under review, he added.⁶³

63 MTI news archive, December 17, 1999.

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FEBRUARY 25, 2000 – VIKTOR ORBÁN INTERVIEW IN *HOLOS UKRAYINY*

On Friday, the newspaper of the Ukrainian parliament, *Holos Ukrayiny*, published a three-column interview with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán titled “Hungary will remain Ukraine’s neighbor even as an EU member”.

Prime Minister Orbán said in the interview that he will meet with representatives of the Hungarian minority living in Ukraine during his visit to the country. He mentioned that there are problems with Hungarian-language education in Ukraine but expressed optimism regarding the resolution of the questions, especially since Ukraine signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1999. Additionally, Mr. Orbán emphasized the importance of economic cooperation. He pointed out that it is necessary to strengthen economic cooperation between the well-developed Hungarian economy and Ukraine, which has great economic potential. He reiterated that Budapest does not wish to introduce visa requirements for Ukrainian citizens until they achieve the full EU membership.⁶⁴

64 MTI news archive, February 25, 2000.

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FEBRUARY 25, 2000 – VIKTOR ORBÁN AND VIKTOR YUSHCHENKO
AT PRESS CONFERENCE

Viktor Orbán presented Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko with the Hungarian government's \$100,000 gift of pharmaceuticals from the pharmaceutical company Richter Gedeon, intended for the Children of Ukraine Foundation and medical institutions in Kyiv.⁶⁵

FEBRUARY 26, 2000 – VIKTOR ORBÁN'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN
BEREGSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE)

Viktor Orbán stated that an agreement has been reached that will facilitate the Hungarian government's support for Hungarian families living in Transcarpathia to pay the fees required to take possession of the land returned by the state. In response to a journalist's question regarding the completion of the hospital in Beregszász (Berehove), the Prime Minister claimed that Ukraine had accumulated \$1 million in debt towards Hungary during the construction of the hospital. He informed his counterparts that Hungary is willing to forgive half of the debt if that amount is used for the renovation or construction of Hungarian institutions in Transcarpathia. He also mentioned that negotiations are still under way regarding this proposal.⁶⁶

65 MTI news archive, February 25, 2000.

66 MTI news archive, February 26, 2000.

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APRIL 20, 2000 – THE UKRAINIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN HUNGARY; JÁNOS MARTONYI

With regards to the bilateral negotiations, Hungarian Foreign Minister János Martonyi highlighted that Ukraine will allocate about half of its \$1 million state debt towards Hungary to support the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, which includes mother education in the mother tongue. Mr. Martonyi emphasized that Hungary supports Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations and stated that the upcoming bilateral negotiations will address issues such as the OECD membership and other international trade policy matters.⁶⁷

JULY 10, 2000 – TRANSCARPATIA: MEETING BETWEEN ZSOLT NÉMETH AND PETRO POROSHENKO

Petro Poroshenko head of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine who is on a visit to Transylvania, met with Zsolt Németh, Political State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, who is participating in a summer university of Fidesz and the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association at the Kostryna mountain resort in Transcarpathia on Sunday.

The two discussed the expansion of relations between Hungary and Ukraine, as well as strengthening of the role of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

67 MTI news archive, April 20, 2000.

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According to MTI's correspondent in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), Mr. Németh stated after the meeting that it is important that contact has been established with the Mr. Poroshenko's faction, which is the sole group in the *Verkhovna Rada* to represent the interests of minorities, including those of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

Mr. Németh described it as a positive development that the European Solidarity faction is committed to promote Ukraine's democratic development, economic reforms aimed at creating a market economy, the country's Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as to strengthen the economic connection between the two countries, with particular emphasis on close cooperation in the border regions.

Mr. Poroshenko told MTI that he was pleased that the parliamentary representative of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, the leader of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Subcarpathia which represents a significant force in the region, has joined the Solidarity faction. The faction's members include the heavily represented Russian-speaking community, as well as representatives of the northern Bukovina Romanian, Polish, and Greek minorities.

The Ukrainian politician confirmed that the Solidarity faction is doing everything possible to expand the rights of national minorities in Ukraine, particularly in order to allow minority organizations to nominate their own candidates in parliamentary and local elections.⁶⁸

68 MTI news archive, July 10, 2000.

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OCTOBER 27, 2000 – TRANSCARPATHIA: UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN DIALOGUE; HUNGARIAN SUPPORT FOR THE ARCHIVES?

On Friday, October 27, 2000, a joint statement was issued about the Ukrainian-Hungarian labor meeting, in which Zoltán Szakács, the Hungarian Consul General in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) and Mihaylo Delehan, director of State Archives of Transcarpathia, discussed the possibility of Hungarian participation in the preservation of Hungarian and Central European documents at the Beregszász (Berehove) unit of the Archives.⁶⁹

69 MTI news archive, October 27, 2000.

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2001

JANUARY 26, 2001 – GROWING SUPPORT FROM THE MOTHER COUNTRY: DISCUSSIONS OF THE TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN SCHOLARSHIP COUNCIL

In addition to local representatives, the meeting was also attended by *Ádám Ríz*, head of the department for minority Hungarian communities at the Ministry of Education. According to Mr. Ríz, apart from the education tenders announced in Hungary, there will also be others to support students studying in their homeland of Transcarpathia. Examples of such tenders include a doctoral support program for five successful applicants, support for the already existing Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, and a tender aimed at supporting law students studying in Ukraine.⁷⁰

APRIL 13, 2001 – SUPPORT FROM THE MOTHER COUNTY FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND PRESERVATION; HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN PRIME MINISTERIAL MEETING IN UNGVÁR (UZHHOROD)

Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian Prime Minister, and his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yushchenko concluded their

⁷⁰ *Kárpátalja*, January 26, 2001, available online at: <https://karpataljalap.net/2001/01/26/novekvo-anyaorszagi-tamogatás> (retrieved July 1, 2023); MTI news archive, April 9, 2001.

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meeting in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) on Monday with the signing of a protocol on flood protection and a joint statement. Ukrainian MP Miklós Kovács, chairman of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia, also attended the meeting.

On behalf of his government, Viktor Yushchenko thanked Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the people of Hungary for the assistance provided to the flood-affected population of Transcarpathia.

Mr. Orbán also stated that Hungary has so far provided HUF 236 million in support to Transcarpathia in connection with the flood. On Tuesday, the government will decide on the disbursement of HUF 200 million in emergency aid for reconstruction, which will be distributed to Hungarian flood victims in Transcarpathia through non-profit organizations.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to the Alliance for their support in the creation of the Status Law. At the meeting, Viktor Orbán referred to the planned family support system as the most important element of the legislation intended to address the situation of Hungarians living beyond the borders, whereby Hungarian families with two or more children who attend Hungarian-language educational institutions are to receive regular support.

Responding to the request of the Alliance regarding the financing of the operation of the Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, the Hungarian Prime Minister explained that after the adoption of the Status Law, the permanent support of the higher education institution will

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be solved in such a way that the current student quota of 300 will be tripled.⁷¹

APRIL 18, 2001 – JÁNOS MARTONYI AND ANATOLIY ZLENKO SPEAK AT PRESS CONFERENCE

Anatoliy Zlenko expressed his gratitude for Hungary's support of Ukraine's participation in European integration processes, as well as for the Hungarian aid provided for restoration after the flood in the Carpathian region.

Mr. Zlenko was also grateful for the Hungarian willingness to sign an agreement on mitigating the adverse effects of the visa system to be introduced between the two countries. In response to a question from MTI about when the introduction of a visa system between the two countries can be expected and what specific relief measures were discussed, Mr. Martonyi reiterated that Hungary will not introduce a visa requirement for Ukrainian citizens until its accession to the European Union. He emphasized that if visa requirements have to be introduced after the country joins the EU, the Hungary will do everything possible to mitigate and eliminate the adverse consequences, including the modernization and expansion of border crossings, simplification of visa issuance practices, and the establishment of consular representation, e.g., in Beregszász (Berehove).⁷²

⁷¹ *Kárpátalja*, April 13, 2001, available online at: <https://karpataljalap.net/2001/04/13/anyaorszagi-tamogatas-az-ujjaepiteshez-es-megmaradashoz> (retrieved July 1, 2023).

⁷² MTI news archive, April 18, 2001.

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SEPTEMBER 13, 2001 – PHARE – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN COOPERATION IN THE BORDER REGION

The minister without portfolio responsible for coordinating PHARE programs expects approximately €2 million in EU support for the Hungarian-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation in the first years.

Imre Boros and Orest Klympush, Ambassador of Ukraine to Hungary, spoke to journalists after signing a joint declaration of intent on the foundations of Hungarian-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation on Thursday in Budapest.⁷³

73 MTI news archive, September 13, 2001.

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2002

FEBRUARY 2, 2002 – UKRAINE AND HUNGARY: FOREIGN MINISTERS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

Anatoliy Zlenko, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, and his Hungarian counterpart János Martonyi published a joint article in the prestigious Ukrainian weekly newspaper, *Zerkalo Nedeli*, in anticipation of President Ferenc Mádl's upcoming visit to Ukraine and the ten-year anniversary of Hungarian-Ukrainian diplomatic relations.

The fact that Hungary – which is most likely to become an EU member – does not intend to introduce a visa system for Ukraine until full membership is achieved, is seen by the Ukrainian side as a sign of strengthening the good neighborly relations and partnership between the two countries.⁷⁴

FEBRUARY 6, 2002, PRESIDENT MÁDL IN UKRAINE: PRESS CONFERENCE, SIGNING OF AGREEMENTS

Ukrainian leader Leonid Kuchma highly appreciated Hungary's support for Ukraine's efforts to become an associated member of the European Union. During their meetings, the two leaders emphasized the significance of both countries'

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MTI news archive, February 2, 2002.

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Euro-Atlantic integration, the facilitation of border traffic, as well as the importance of strengthening the fight against terrorism, Mr. Mádl said.

The Hungarian President expressed his gratitude for the reception of the so-called Status Law in Ukraine and stated that the Hungarian government is ready for further consultations if any problems arise.⁷⁵

FEBRUARY 7, 2002 – TRANSCARPATHIA: MÁDL IN UKRAINE; OPENING OF THE STUDENT HALL IN BEREHOVE

Ferenc Mádl, President of Hungary, and Anatoliy Kinakh, the Ukrainian Prime Minister, inaugurated the student hall of the Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education in Beregszász (Berehove) on Thursday. The Hungarian President was greeted by the leaders of local Hungarian organizations and churches, as well as an enthusiastic crowd in the town, which is considered to be the administrative and cultural center of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

Ferenc Mádl expressed his happiness regarding the warm reception. Many residents of the town and its surroundings expressed their gratitude to the President of Hungary for the support from the motherland and the Status Law. Later, Mr. Mádl and Mr. Kinakh inaugurated the dormitory of the Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education,

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MTI news archive, February 6, 2002.

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which was completed in less than a year with help from Hungary.

In his opening speech, the Hungarian President emphasized that he believes Ukraine does everything possible, within its capabilities, to ensure that the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia feels comfortable. He also added that, according to the cooperation, Hungary is also doing a lot for the well-being of the Hungarian communities living beyond the country's borders. The President of Hungary assured the large audience that the Status Law will provide various forms of support for the Hungarian communities living abroad.

After the inauguration of the student hall, President Mádl attended a ceremony in the town center, where local officials handed over the symbolic key of the former county court building of Bereg to the leaders of the college, and thus transferred the ownership of the largest, but run-down building of the town to the Hungarian educational institution.⁷⁶

APRIL 9, 2002 – DEPARTMENT OF UKRAINIAN PHILOLOGY OPENS AT ELTE

On Tuesday, the Faculty of Humanities at ELTE in Budapest celebrated the introduction of a new Department of Ukrainian philology. The ceremony was attended by Zsolt

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MTI news archive, February 7, 2002.

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Németh, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ádám Kiss, the Deputy State Secretary for Higher Education at the Ministry of Education, Gábor Náray-Szabó, Deputy State Secretary for International Affairs, and ambassadorial advisor Yuriy Mushka.

Mr. Németh described the opening of the faculty as a major event in the history of Hungarian-Ukrainian political relations.⁷⁷

MAY 7, 2002 – UKRAINE AND NATO IN JOINT FLOOD DEFENSE SCHEME

A group of experts from 12 countries finalized the action plan for the first phase of the Ukraine-NATO project, which was established last year to enhance the flood protection and defense capability of the Carpathian region. The meeting took place in Budapest on Tuesday.

The first phase aims to comprehensively assess the flood protection situation in Transcarpathia and the Upper Tisza river basin, and to propose the implementation of the most important tasks necessary for preparedness and enhancement of flood protection. Hungary offers the participation of two experts, as well as financial support of HUF 3 million from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and HUF 5.5 million from the Ministry of Environment and Water for the implementation of the Ukraine-NATO project.⁷⁸

77 MTI news archive, April 9, 2002.

78 MTI news archive, May 7, 2002.

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SEPTEMBER 18, 2002 – ISTVÁN GAJDOS ON DEBT RELATED TO BEREKSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE) HOSPITAL AND THE TERMINATION OF LOCAL BORDER TRAFFIC: MTI INTERVIEW

During the budget meeting of the human rights, minority, and regional cooperation committee of the Ukrainian parliament on Wednesday, István Gajdos, the committee's secretary and Hungarian parliamentary representative for Transcarpathia, proposed including the use of Ukraine's remaining debt towards Hungary in exchange for the construction of the Berekszász (Berehove) hospital.

Mr. Gajdos also made a similar request in a letter addressed to Prime Minister Anatoliy Kinakh and Viktor Medvedchuk, the People's Deputy of Ukraine. Hungary has waived the debt worth \$1 million on the condition that the Ukraine uses it for the renovation of Ukrainian-Hungarian educational and cultural institutions.

The representative told an MTI correspondent that everyone understands that as a requirement of Hungary's future membership in the European Union, it will be forced to terminate the local border traffic agreement, which is expected to happen on January 1, 2003.⁷⁹

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2003

FEBRUARY 20, 2003 – UKRAINIAN CONSULATE OPENS IN NYÍREGYHÁZA

A Ukrainian consulate opened in Nyíregyháza on Thursday. The office dealing with economic and passport-related issues was inaugurated by Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Anatoliy Zlenko. Not even the Schengen border can be some sort of strict dividing line between the two neighboring countries and their people, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister said. Regarding the visa requirement between the two countries after Hungary's accession to the EU, he indicated that negotiations are underway, and he is confident that the best solution for both sides will be found to allow for the free travel for citizens.⁸⁰

FEBRUARY 24, 2003 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN WTO NEGOTIATIONS

The bilateral trade negotiations between Hungary and Ukraine related to Ukraine's accession process to the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been concluded.

80 MTI news archive, February 20, 2003.

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The aim of the talks from the Hungarian side was to significantly reduce the market access barriers for Hungarian goods and services exported to Ukraine, and to improve the security and conditions of energy imports.⁸¹

FEBRUARY 25, 2003 – MEMORIAL PLAQUE FOR UKRAINIAN MUSICIANS IN BUDAPEST

On Tuesday, a plaque was unveiled in honor of six Ukrainian-born musicians who once performed at the Pesti Vigadó in Budapest. The marble plaque was placed on the arcade wall of the institution, featuring the names of Alexander Brailowsky (1896-1976), Shura Cherkassky (1911-1995), pianists Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989) and Mischa Elman (1891-1967), violinist Nathan Milstein (1903-1992), and cellist Gregor Piatigorsky (1903-1976).⁸²

MARCH 4, 2003 – SIGNATURE OF THE HUNGARY-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY ENERGY INDUSTRY COOPERATION MEMORANDUM

The traditional cooperation between the economic committees of the Hungarian and Ukrainian parliaments has been transformed into concrete cooperation between the energy subcommittee of the Hungarian Parliament and the energy

81 MTI news archive, February 24, 2003.

82 MTI news archive, February 25, 2003.

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and nuclear safety committee of the Ukrainian Parliament, László Puch, Chairman of the Hungarian parliamentary committee on economic affairs, said in Kyiv on Tuesday.

Following the signing of a cooperation memorandum with Andriy Klyuyev, the chairman of the Ukrainian parliamentary committee on energy and nuclear safety, László Puch indicated at a press conference held after the meeting that cooperation reached between the two countries would help facilitate legislative work, establish mechanisms for harmonizing European Union law, ease information exchange related to solving specific energy problems, and stabilize long-term cooperation between the two countries.⁸³

OCTOBER 9, 2003 – UKRAINE: UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN VISA AGREEMENT SIGNED IN KYIV

Ukraine and Hungary signed a visa agreement on Thursday in Kyiv, under which Ukrainian citizens can travel to Hungary with a free, long-term visa while Hungarian citizens can still enter Ukraine without a visa from November.⁸⁴

83 MTI news archive, March 4, 2003.

84 MTI news archive, October 9, 2003.

2004

MAY 7, 2004 – HUNGARIAN AID FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE EXPLOSION IN UKRAINE

An aid shipment assembled by the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity will be shipped on Friday afternoon to the victims of the explosions in the area of Melitopol, informed the organization the MTI. According to the statement, the aid will consist of bandages, drinking water, food, and blankets, worth 1.5 million HUF. The aid will be procured by the Charity in Ukraine.

On Thursday, several powerful explosions occurred at a southeast Ukrainian military base near Novobohdanivka, between Melitopol and Zaporizhzhia. As a result of the explosions, according to the current data, five people lost their lives and many were injured. Additionally, several thousand residents of surrounding villages had to be evacuated from the area of the disaster.⁸⁵

JUNE 1, 2004 – FERENC MÁDL: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE IS IN THE HUNGARIAN INTEREST

It is in Hungary's interest for Ukraine to integrate into Europe, Ferenc Mádl said. On Tuesday, the President of Hun-

85 MTI news archive, May 7, 2004.

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gary welcomed Michael Martin, Speaker of the House of Commons of the British Parliament, and Volodymyr Lytvyn, Chairman of the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*, in his office at the invitation of the President of the Hungarian National Assembly in Budapest. Katalin Szili, Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, also attended the meeting.

President Mádl highlighted that the enlargement of the European Union provides an appropriate opportunity for further momentum in the relationship between the EU and Ukraine, the presidential office told MTI after the meeting.

He also added that Hungary has developed a program package to promote Ukraine's European Union integration within the framework of the "Wider Europe" program.⁸⁶

JUNE 30, 2004 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN JOINT COMMITTEE ON MINORITIES: CO-CHAIRMEN HOLD MEETING

The Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad has informed MTI that the co-chairs of the Hungarian-Ukrainian Joint Committee on Minorities, Vilmos Szabó and Hennadiy Moskal, discussed issues related to the Ukrainian electoral law, the Hungarian school in Huszt (Khust) and the Hungarian college in Beregszász (Berehove) at their meeting on Wednesday.

According to the statement, Mr. Szabó raised the issue of the Ukrainian electoral law, which was modified to the

86 MTI news archive, June 1, 2004.

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disadvantage of minorities. Based on the decision of the Ukrainian parliament in March, individual electoral districts were abolished, and mandates can only be obtained from a party list with a 3 percent threshold.

The State Secretary also raised the issue of the prolonged case of the Hungarian school in Huszt (Khust). At the twelfth meeting of the Joint Committee, Transcarpathian authorities promised to promote the educational institution to a secondary school, a pledge that has not been acted on yet.

Furthermore, the situation regarding the ownership of the new building of the Hungarian college in Beregszász (Berehove) was also discussed.

Mr. Moskal claimed that the Ukrainian government aims for satisfactory solutions regarding all minority issues and highlighted that his government is interested in restoring the legal status of the ownership of the new building of the College. As a result, the college could operate in the former courthouse building in the town. The next meeting will be held in Budapest in fall 2004.

At the twelfth meeting of the joint committee, Transcarpathian authorities committed to upgrading the Hungarian school in Huszt (Khust) to a secondary school, as well as to complete the unfinished wing of the only Hungarian secondary school in Ungvár (Uzhhorod). It was also announced that funding has been found to resolve the issues related to the Illyés Gyula Hungarian National Theater in Beregszász (Berehove).

Additionally, a proposal was put forward to establish a Hungarian history department and a Hungarian-speaking student group at the Faculty of History at Uzhhorod Nation-

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al University. However, no solution was found to complete the construction of the Hungarian conquest memorial at the Verecke (Veretskyi) Pass.⁸⁷

NOVEMBER 10, 2004 – ORBÁN-YUSHCHENKO MEETING TAKES PLACE IN KYIV

During the discussion held on Wednesday in Kyiv between Viktor Orbán, as Vice-President of the European People's Party, and Viktor Yushchenko, the presidential candidate of the Our Ukraine party, questions about the fairness and transparency of the second round of the Ukrainian presidential election were also raised.

Mr. Orbán told MTI over a telephone connection that the meeting with Mr. Yushchenko took place on the occasion of the Ukrainian presidential candidate signing an election agreement, containing important promises for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. The agreement was also signed by Miklós Kovács, the president of The Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association.

After the meeting, Viktor Orbán also mentioned that his host shared his concerns about the fairness and transparency of the presidential elections, as the results of the first round are only announced 10 days after voting. "I promised Mr. Yushchenko that the European People's Party, and

87 MTI news archive, June 30, 2004.

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through its faction, the European Parliament will monitor the elections closely. In the second round, we will increase the number of our observers and do everything in our power to ensure a clean and transparent election,” he added.

Evaluating the agreement between Mr. Yushchenko and the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia, Orbán explained that the document attempts to address issues that have not yet been adequately resolved at this level. According to Mr. Orbán, the situation of the Hungarian community and their institutions in Transcarpathia has become more difficult recently, not only because of less support and cooperation from Budapest but also due to the behavior of both the Ukrainian government and local authorities.

Mr. Orbán emphasized that these disadvantages need to be eliminated, past grievances need to be resolved, and the foundations of a minority institutional system that conforms to European norms must be laid down in the future. The recently signed agreement is a step in the right direction, showing that Viktor Yushchenko is a partner in this matter, said Mr. Orbán.⁸⁸

NOVEMBER 18, 2004 – THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN EU CB PROJECT DEEMED A SUCCESS

The Hungarian-Ukrainian Cooperation Bridge 2003 (CB) project, supported by the European Union, was success-

88 MTI news archive, November 10, 2004.

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ful, said András Tisza, CEO of the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Development Agency, at the closing conference of the cooperation on Thursday in Nyíregyháza. The project focused on the joint development of the border region between the two countries.

The regions involved, Szabolcs county and Transcarpathia, were able to use €103,00 in support from Brussels to further strengthen their relations, the regional development expert told MTI.⁸⁹

89 MTI news archive, November 18, 2004.

2005

JANUARY 19, 2005 – FERENC SOMOGYI HOLDS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NEW UKRAINIAN LEADERSHIP IN KYIV

Ferenc Somogyi, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, held talks with the most significant members of the new Ukrainian leadership in Kyiv, Foreign Ministry spokesman Viktor Polgár told MTI on Wednesday.

According to the spokesman, an important topic was the demand and possibility of sharing Hungary's experience in the process of the European integration.

Ferenc Somogyi considered it a positive development, that the Transcarpathian Court of Appeals restored the ownership rights of the building of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education in Beregszász (Berehove). Hungary also sees this as a sign of the Ukrainian democratization process, which fills us with optimism for the relationship between the two countries, the Foreign Minister said according to the spokesman.⁹⁰

90 MTI news archive, January 19, 2005.

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MARCH 2, 2005 – HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A territorial development program between Hungary and Ukraine with the support of the European Union's PHARE project fund has been launched in the two countries' border areas. Project contracts were signed on Wednesday in Mátészalka.

As part of the program, 19 projects worth €600,000 (approximately HUF 150 million) will be implemented by the winning applicants, the local governments and businesses of the Hungarian-Ukrainian border region, said Csilla Veres, regional director of the Hungarian Regional Development and Urbanistics Company.⁹¹

MARCH 16, 2005 – HUNGARIAN FLOOD PROTECTION EQUIPMENT FOR TRANSCARPATHIA

On Wednesday morning, technical equipment and materials that can be used for flood protection were sent from Nyíregyháza to Transcarpathia as Hungarian government aid.

The equipment includes five computers to be used for the safe operation of the Hungarian-Ukrainian hydrological monitoring system. Besides, 150,000 sandbags, 2,000 square meters of PVC film to protect dams from extreme

91 MTI news archive, March 2, 2005.

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waves, and 500 torches for night-time flood protection were also sent, Róbert Lőrincz, deputy section engineer at the Upper Tisza Region Environmental and Water Management Directorate told MTI.⁹²

JUNE 29, 2005 – HUNGARIAN SUPPORT FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE FORMER CASINO IN BEREGSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE)

The Cultural Heritage Protection Office will provide professional and financial assistance for the restoration of the former officers' casino in Beregszász (Berehove), told the office to the MTI.

The Cultural Heritage Protection Office, the task of which includes the preservation of historical monuments beyond the country's borders, sent experts to the location to assess the damage caused by the fire, press officer Katalin Róna pointed out.

The entire roof structure of the building, built in 1895, burned down on Monday and its walls were also damaged, Mihály Ráday said. Mr. Ráday, a member of the urban development committee of Budapest City Council and advisor for the Cultural Heritage Protection Office, learned about the fire from the local urban conservation association.⁹³

92 MTI news archive, March 16, 2005.

93 MTI news archive, June 29, 2005.

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JULY 13, 2005 – HUNGARY HANDS OVER LIST OF PROJECTS TO UKRAINE

Hungary has handed over a long list of potential projects to Ukraine in which it can help its neighbor with its integration to Europe, the Hungarian Foreign Minister told journalists after talks with his Ukrainian partner on Wednesday in Budapest.

Answering a question, the Hungarian Foreign Minister said that the list includes, for example, the handling of the Hungarian aspects of the visa agreement which is to be finalized soon between the EU and Ukraine, sharing Hungarians experience with Ukrainian administrative leaders, the expansion of the Nyíregyháza initiative designed to promote the democratization of Ukraine with the participation and financing of other EU partners, as well as sharing Hungarian experiences in operating institutions and public communications.⁹⁴

OCTOBER 1, 2005. – DEPARTMENT OF HUNGARIAN HISTORY ESTABLISHED AT UZHGOROD NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

On Saturday, Vilmos Szabó, the political state secretary responsible for Hungarians beyond the borders at the Prime Minister's Office, ceremoniously unveiled the Hungarian history department at Uzhgorod National University.

94 MTI news archive, July 13, 2005.

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In his speech at the opening of the history department established with the financial support of the Hungarian government, Mr. Szabó emphasized the importance and symbolic significance of creating a department within a public university that teaches Hungarian history in the Hungarian language. According to Mr. Szabó, through the introduction of the Hungarian history department, the range of mother tongue and scientific institutions serving the preservation and education of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia has expanded. At the same time, a new link has been established to strengthen interstate relations between Hungary and Ukraine. He expressed his joy that the Ukrainian government supports Hungary's efforts to assist the ethnic Hungarian community.⁹⁵

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2006

JANUARY 20, 2006 – JUHÁSZ: HUNGARY SUPPORTS UKRAINE'S
ACCESSION TO NATO

Minister of Defense Ferenc Juhász stated that in the upcoming months, Hungary will share its experiences gained during the NATO accession process and the establishment of a voluntary, professional army.

A Hungarian-Ukrainian defense cooperation enabling participation in international missions and trainings, as well as cooperation in military education, has also been signed.⁹⁶

SEPTEMBER 13, 2006 – SZILI: A HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN ACTION
PLAN IS NEEDED

Katalin Szili held talks in Ukraine on bilateral relations, European integration issues, and the situation of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. On Tuesday, The Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly said at a press conference held at Budapest's Ferenc Liszt International Airport, that during her visit, she met with Oleksandr Moroz, Chair-

96 MTI news archive, January 20, 2006.

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man of the *Verkhovna Rada*, of Ukraine; President Viktor Yushchenko; Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych; Minister of Foreign Affairs Borys Tarasyuk; Minister of Economy Volodymyr Makukha; and representatives of the Hungarian community in Kyiv.

According to Ms. Szili, Mr. Yanukovych assured her that the Kyiv government is committed to European orientation.

Regarding Hungarians in Transcarpathia, she mentioned that the issue of the joint financing of the College in Beregszász (Berehove), which also has Ukrainian students, was raised. Her negotiating partners promised to review the subject. Ms. Szili also requested that, just as in previous years, textbooks should be supplied in the 104 Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia, which has not happened yet this year. According to the Speaker's report, she also received assurances regarding the resolution of this issue.

Ms. Szili said that it is regretful that under the current electoral system, the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia is unable a representative to the Ukrainian parliament in Kyiv.

She claimed that Hungary supports the idea of an association agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, and the Hungarian parliament also assists the Ukrainian legislature in the issue of legal harmonization.

According to the politician, it would be necessary to create an action plan of five to six tasks between the two neighboring countries. Ms. Szili also emphasized that the construction of a highway between Kyiv and Budapest is important economically and a fundamental interest of Transcarpathia.

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Additionally, the Speaker raised the issue of counterfeit Tokaj wines, which her negotiating partners had no information about; however, they pledged to review the situation.⁹⁷

OCTOBER 23, 2006 – PRESIDENT LÁSZLÓ SÓLYOM HOLDS BILATERAL MEETING WITH UKRAINIAN AND PORTUGUESE COUNTERPARTS

According to András Gulyás, foreign policy advisor to President László Sólyom, the President of Hungary held bilateral talks with the Ukrainian and Portuguese Presidents. The presidents were attending a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Hungarian Revolution of 1956 on Monday. President Sólyom expressed his support for Ukraine's integration efforts and emphasized that Ukraine can indicate its Euro-Atlantic commitment with good performance and clear messages.

Viktor Yushchenko provided information on their resolution related to the energy crisis at the beginning of the year and the long-term plans that could be impactful for European energy cooperation. According to Mr. Gulyás, economic and cultural cooperation was also on the agenda during the meeting.

He said that in the near future, a joint bilingual edition of poems by Taras Shevchenko and Sándor Petőfi will be published, with an introduction written by the two presidents.⁹⁸

97 MTI news archive, September 13, 2006.

98 MTI news archive, October 23, 2006.

2007

JANUARY 26, 2007 – EMERGENCY AID FOR FLOOD VICTIMS IN
TRANSCARPATHIA

The Hungarian Ecumenical Charity provides is providing HUF 500,000 in emergency aid to flood victims in Transcarpathia, the organization told MTI on Friday. According to the statement, aid packages will provide non-perishable food, bottled drinking water, hygiene and personal care products for the displaced families.

The charity pointed out that it previously established a disaster relief office in 1998 due to frequent flood hazards, meaning that employees of the office in Beregszász (Berehove) can help the affected people among the first.

On Friday, the regional office of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Ukraine announced that the Tisza, Ung (Uzh) and Borzsa (Borzhava) rivers had flooded in the region of Transcarpathia due to the heavy January rainfall, endangering inhabited areas. More than 500 residential buildings across 20 towns and villages in the county have been submerged, with the most severe damages in Técső (Tyachiv), Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) and Perecseny (Perechyn). On Friday morning, more than seven thousand people were evacuated, and their livestock were also placed in safety.⁹⁹

99 MTI news archive, January 26, 2007.

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MAY 22, 2007 – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: HUNGARY SUPPORTS UKRAINE'S EURO-ATLANTIC ASPIRATIONS

Hungary supports Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations and is ready to advocate for its Eastern neighbor in the European Union, László Szóke, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said at the meeting of the National Assembly's committee for foreign affairs and Hungarian minorities abroad on Tuesday.

"It is in our interest for Ukraine to move closer to Euro-Atlantic mechanisms, and therefore we encourage and support Ukrainian efforts while acknowledging that the pace of this process should be determined by the country's intentions and capabilities," Mr. Szóke said. He added that Hungary is ready to be the "advocate" of Ukraine in the European Union.

According to the politician, Hungary would like the EU to consider Ukraine as a prime partner and to conclude an association agreement with it, a goal also supported by Poland.

The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also mentioned Ukraine's accession to European energy cooperation as another interest of Hungary's. Hungary also aims to have an independent, integration-friendly state as its eastern neighbor with a thriving economy and an open market for Hungarian entrepreneurs.¹⁰⁰

100 MTI news archive, May 22, 2007.

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JULY 11, 2007 – INAUGURATION OF TARAS SHEVCHENKO'S MONUMENT IN BUDAPEST

The statue in memory of Taras Shevchenko, Ukrainian poet and artist, was unveiled in the presence of Ukrainian President, Viktor Yushchenko, and Hungarian President, László Sólyom, in Budapest on Wednesday. The bronze statue depicting the sitting figure was created by the Ukrainian artist Ivan Mikhitiuk.

If one wishes to express their respect for the Ukrainian people anywhere in the world, they build a monument to Taras Shevchenko, Mr. Yushchenko said.

At the end of his speech, the Ukrainian president expressed his “deepest gratitude” on behalf of the Ukrainian state and its nation to all those who contributed to the creation of the monument. “The statue represents the friendship, love, and good neighborly relationship between our nations,” he added.¹⁰¹

101 MTI news archive, July 11, 2007.

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2008

APRIL 3, 2008 – HUNGARY WAS AN EXTREMELY ACTIVE ORGANIZER AMONG THE SUPPORTERS OF THE NATO EXPANSION, KINGA GÖNCZ SAYS

Hungary was an extremely active organizer among the supporters of the NATO expansion; the Hungarian delegation highlighted at the Bucharest summit that as many countries as possible should be part of the alliance in the interest of stability in the Western Balkans, Hungarian Foreign Minister told journalists on Thursday in Bucharest.

According to the minister, Hungary has always promoted that both Ukraine and Georgia should gradually move forward with the Euro-Atlantic integration. Member states were divided on this issue, so the most important aspect was to reach an agreement, she added. Ms. Göncz also said that a common position was eventually reached, according to which both countries belong within the alliance, and their future NATO membership is unquestionable.

Hungary was an extremely active organizer of those supporting the expansion of NATO. She also added that a common set of values and cooperation can help the Western Balkans to move towards stability.¹⁰²

102 MTI news archive, April 3, 2008.

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APRIL 11, 2008 – MEETING OF THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE IN BUDAPEST

According to a statement released by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development on Friday, the Hungarian-Ukrainian intergovernmental committee for cross-border cooperation held its meeting in Budapest on Thursday and Friday.

After the country's accession to the Schengen Agreement, Hungary was the first to sign a local border traffic agreement with Ukraine. Based on this agreement, people living in the border area can obtain permission to cross the border easier and quicker than through the visa process.¹⁰³

JULY 7, 2008 – LÁSZLÓ SÓLYOM: HUNGARIAN SCHOOLS IN TRANSCARPATHIA SHOULD NOT MOVE BACKWARDS

President László Sólyom stated that Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia should not move backwards, given “the moment education becomes bilingual, the language will be lost”. After the meeting with his Hungarian partner, Mr. Yushchenko said at the press conference that “the Ukrainian side is open to finding a solution to the issue of bilingual education in Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia.” He also stated that the parties have agreed on negotiations to take place between the two education ministries in Kyiv next week.

103 MTI news archive, April 11, 2008.

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Experts are developing an action plan to solve the problem of bilingual education in Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia. Mr. Yushchenko indicated that mastering the state language increases the chances for primary school students to enter higher education institutions in Ukraine. Accordingly, the necessary textbooks are already in printing.

Mr. Sólyom highlighted that the Ukrainian Ministry of Education's Decree No. 461, requiring Hungarian schools to become bilingual with a two-year transition period, is a problem. This would accelerate the assimilation of the Hungarian minority; Hungary, as the mother country of 3.5 million Hungarians beyond its borders, cannot agree with this. The legislation also contradicts the Hungarian-Ukrainian Declaration on the Recognition of Minority Rights, as well as the Hungarian-Ukrainian Basic Treaty. Hungary supports the effective education of the Ukrainian state language, but this requires adequate Ukrainian textbooks and teachers, he stressed.

On the other hand, President Yushchenko highly appreciated the local border traffic agreement signed with Hungary. He also presented the Hungarian President with a First Class decoration of the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, while President László Sólyom awarded his Ukrainian counterpart with the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit.

Mr. Sólyom told Hungarian journalists that regarding Hungarian-language education in Transcarpathia, partial results have been achieved since his visit to the area in January. However, these only provide temporary solutions to the problems. Referring to the Ministry of Education's or-

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der, he insisted that “we cannot move backwards from the current state”. “Based on the experience of other Hungarian minority communities, the introduction of bilingual education results in the loss of the language,” he added.¹⁰⁴

JULY 31, 2008 – GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON: TENS OF MILLIONS IN AID TO UKRAINE

According to a press statement of Minister of Finance, János Veres, Hungary is providing tens of millions of forints in aid to Ukraine due to flooding. Hungarian charities are tasked with delivering the aid, the minister added. Based on his statement, food, medicine, and materials necessary for flood protection will be shipped to the affected areas.

Mr. Veres explained that life-saving equipment, medicines, bandages, resuscitation equipment, and disinfectants are already prepared in boxes and ready to be shipped. Moreover, Hungary has offered sandbags, geotextile, night protection equipment and mobile pumps.

According to the minister, Hungary can also provide manpower for flood protection if requested.¹⁰⁵

104 MTI news archive, July 7, 2008.

105 MTI news archive, July 31, 2008.

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AUGUST 2, 2008 – HUNGARIAN AID SHIPMENT TO FLOOD-HIT UKRAINE

Hungary is sending a relief aid worth over HUF 100 million to the flood-affected region of Ukraine. The convoy, consisting of seven trucks carrying defense equipment, medicines, and food, crossed the Záhony-Csap (Chop) border station at Saturday noon. The aid was handed over by János Veres, Minister of Finance, and László Kóthay, State Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Water, on behalf of the Hungarian government.

When a country is hit by a natural disaster, it is essential that neighboring states should provide assistance, Mr. Veres said. Following the Hungarian government's swift decision, technical equipment, tools, life-saving devices, medicines, medical aids, and food will be delivered to the flood-affected areas of Western Ukraine.

State Secretary László Kóthay added that Hungary will also assist the reconstruction in Ukraine with experts. Five employees of the Upper-Tisza Regional Environment and Water Directorate will participate in the repair of the damaged flood defenses and remote monitoring systems in the coming days.

According to the State Secretary, Hungarian professionals will carry out work worth about HUF 40 million in the neighboring country.

Mr. Kóthay mentioned that this sum does not form part of the HUF 102 million aid package. He noted that the flood protection equipment in the aid package can be used by Ukrainian water management organizations not only now

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but also in the coming years, so their actual value is four times higher.

The shipment includes, for example, a light system that provides continuous lighting for a kilometer-long stretch with the help of a power generator, making it possible to carry out necessary work day and night. In addition, the trucks are transferring torches, geotextiles, and equipment for filling sandbags.

Gáspár Bodnár, the director of the Water Management Directorate in Nyíregyháza, told MTI that the joint Hungarian-Ukrainian remote signaling system was also damaged as a result of lightning strikes from the cyclone that caused the flood. Therefore, experts based in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county sent to Ukraine will first carry out repairs to the system.¹⁰⁶

AUGUST 31, 2008 – UZHGOROD NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RECEIVED THE MOST HUNGARIAN SUPPORT

The Uzhhorod National University provides adequate space for the members of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia who seek to expand their knowledge. At the university, national minorities have the right to learn in their mother tongue, Mykola Vehesh, the institution's rector, told the weekend edition of the *Igazi Kárpáti Igaz Szó* newspaper.

106 MTI news archive, August 2, 2008.

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According to his statement, representatives of other nationalities also receive similar treatment to the Hungarians at the university, but as he emphasized, the institution received the most support from the Hungarians.¹⁰⁷

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008 – HUNGARY SUPPORTS THE NATO MEMBERSHIP OF GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

Hungary supports the NATO membership of Georgia and Ukraine and that the two countries should receive an invitation to the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which represents the gateway to membership, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kinga Göncz at a press conference held in Budapest.

Regarding the Georgian-Russian crisis, the Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted that isolating Russia and imposing sanctions against Moscow is not a solution. As she said, dialogue with Russia must be maintained and it must be made clear what is acceptable and what is not.¹⁰⁸

NOVEMBER 6, 2008. HUNGARY SUPPORTS UKRAINE'S NATO ACCESSION

Hungary supports Ukraine's NATO accession and is willing to share all the necessary experience to achieve this, Minis-

107 MTI news archive, August 31, 2008.

108 MTI news archive, September 17, 2008.

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ter of Defense Imre Szekeres said at a press conference held at the consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) on Thursday.

In response to a journalist's question, the minister said that he feels the future of the Hungarian language in Transcarpathia is endangered due to measures taken by the Ukrainian government.¹⁰⁹

2009

FEBRUARY 18, 2009 – HUNGARIAN RED CROSS SIGNS AGREEMENT IN TRANSCARPATHIA

The Hungarian Red Cross and the Transcarpathian region branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross signed an agreement on Wednesday in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) to further expand their cooperation.

Director-General Erik Selymes stated that the Hungarian Red Cross delegation delivered a relief shipment to the boarding school in Nagyberég (Velyki Berehy) on Wednesday.

The director emphasized that the Hungarian Red Cross is seeking to expand its cooperation with Transcarpathia and considers Ukraine a strategic partner.

109 MTI news archive, November 6, 2008.

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Under the agreement signed with the Ukrainian Red Cross in Transcarpathia, one of the points requires Hungary to train 5,000 Ukrainian professionals for work in emergency situations.

Oleh Havashi, head of the Transcarpathian Regional State Administration, highlighted the importance of Ukrainian experts acquiring the best practices, advanced technologies and working methods. Regarding flood protection in the region, he added that the area can only be protected from disasters through joint efforts.¹¹⁰

OCTOBER 6, 2009 – HUNGARIAN SUPPORT FOR BEREKSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE) IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

Hungary donated IT equipment to the respiratory center in Berekszász (Berehove), the pulmonary department of the district hospital, and the medical office operating in the Roma neighborhood.

According to the Ministry of Health of Ukraine's data, the country registered about 40,000 new cases of tuberculosis and 77 cases of tuberculosis per 100,000 population last year. Consequently, the Hungarian support for the local healthcare institutions fighting against tuberculosis came at the right time.

110 MTI news archive, February 18, 2009.

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The number of patients suffering from tuberculosis is increasing every year in the Beregszász (Berehove) region of Ukraine, while the healthcare system is underfunded, *Novini Zakarpattya*, the county's official newspaper, reported on Tuesday.¹¹¹

NOVEMBER 3, 2009. RED CROSS SENDS FACE MASKS AND MEDICINES TO TRANSCARPATHIA

The chairman of the Hungarian Red Cross handed over forty thousand face masks and medicines that relieve symptoms of influenza to the Ukrainian Embassy in Budapest on Tuesday. The aid shipment will depart for Transcarpathia early Wednesday morning.

The packages were handed over by Hungarian Red Cross chairman György Habsburg to Dmytro Tkach, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Hungary.

Erik Selymes, Director-General of the Hungarian Red Cross, stated that the shipment contains antipyretic medication and antibiotics worth HUF 3 million. He also added that another shipment will likely depart later this week.

Mr. Selymes stated that they would like to continue the aid campaign until the waning of the epidemic in Ukraine.

According to the Director-General, fourteen cases have been confirmed to be caused by the H1N1 virus. The ambas-

111 MTI news archive, October 6, 2009.

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sador said that Ukraine was not completely prepared for the epidemic. Western Ukrainian pharmacies do not have enough medicine and protective masks. Therefore, an atmosphere of panic has developed in the affected regions.

Dmytro Tkach expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian Red Cross for their quick response to Ukraine's request.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko requested help from the international community, including Hungary, on Sunday to combat the influenza epidemic in Ukraine. Mr. Yushchenko stated that the epidemic "is a real threat to Ukraine's national security that we are unable to neutralize on our own and it requires me to turn to close friends and strategic partners for urgent assistance".¹¹²

MARCH 9, 2010 – WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UNDER DEVELOPMENT WITH HUNGARIAN HELP IN THE BEREGSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE) AREA

A waste management system in the Beregszász (Berehove) area of Ukraine will be built with Hungarian help, Oszkár Seszták, chairman of the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County General Assembly, said at the press conference in Nyíregyháza on Tuesday.

Plans for the waste management system serving 50 settlements were developed with HUF 22 million from the Eu-

112 MTI news archive, November 3, 2009.

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ropean Economic Area and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, the regional government leader pointed out.

He added that the project was developed with the mentoring of the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Council and the establishment of a regional solid waste management association, with the participation of the Upper-Tisza Regional Environment and Water Directorate and the Beregszász (Berehove) District Council.

Béla Csizmár, head of the Berehove (Beregszász) District Council, said that according to the plans, a modern landfill site with a sorting and recycling facility will be created near the town of Makkosjánosi (Yanoshi) in Transcarpathia, where household waste from the area's 100,000 inhabitants will be transported.

The final proposal for the construction of the facility will be submitted to the European Union at the end of March, and after its approval, the site is expected to be built within one year. Cost will reach €1 million, meaning that in addition to the EU support, Ukrainian national funds will also be used. The development will be a model for creating similar waste management systems in other regions of Transcarpathia, and even across the whole of Ukraine, Mr. Csizmár added.¹¹³

113 MTI news archive, March 9, 2010.

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MARCH 22, 2010 – PÉTER BALÁZS: THE EU SHOULDN'T LET UKRAINE GO

Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Balázs urged the EU not to abandon Ukraine after the formation of a pro-Russian government following the presidential election. He presented the Hungarian standpoint to journalists in Brussels during a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

According to the head of the Hungarian diplomatic service, the European perspective should be promoted for Ukraine, which could mean economic cooperation and visa liberalization. He believes that the new leadership in Kyiv does not intend to turn towards Russia to the extent that Belarus has, but rather wants to profile itself “between East and West”. Hungary believes that in this situation, the EU must maintain this perspective.¹¹⁴

MAY 12, 2010 – NEW WING OF THE HUNGARIAN FACULTY BUILDING OPENS AT UZHHOROD NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

On Wednesday, the second wing of the Hungarian-language Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences at Uzhhorod National University was inaugurated with support from Hungary. The newly renovated wing was financed by Hungary and includes lecture halls and laboratories.

114 MTI news archive, March 22, 2010.

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In the last five years, Hungary has provided a total of about HUF 100 million in support to the establishment and operation of the Hungarian-language faculty at the University, where students can study Hungarian history, language, and literature, as well as physics and mathematics.¹¹⁵

NOVEMBER 12, 2010 – EU PRESIDENCY – VIKTOR ORBÁN: WE ARE PREPARING FOR STABLE AND PREDICTABLE UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN COOPERATION

On Friday, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán discussed the development of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations, deepening economic cooperation, and Hungarian support for Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic integration efforts with his Ukrainian counterpart, Mykola Azarov, in Kyiv.

While Hungarian-Ukrainian relations have been neglected recently, but “now the stars are well aligned” as the current Ukrainian leadership has stabilized Ukraine, “and I am now working to stabilize Hungary,” the Hungarian Prime Minister said. “We are preparing for the cooperation of two stable and predictable countries,” he added. Orbán also mentioned that “the bold measures taken by the new Ukrainian government to repeal steps that were disadvantageous to the Hungarian minority in Ukraine are highly appreciated.” Consequently, Mr. Orbán promised the Ukrainian Prime

115 MTI news archive, May 12, 2010.

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Minister that obstacles standing in the way of teaching the Ukrainian language in Hungary will be swiftly removed.

Regarding Hungary's upcoming EU presidency next year, Viktor Orbán said that the future of the EU leads towards Ukraine, given the EU needs to grow and strengthen and this is only possible towards the direction of Ukraine.

“Real space and power can only be achieved by moving in this direction,” he emphasized, adding that “we are in a very rare moment of grace in Ukrainian-Hungarian politics, as there are no obstructing factors in Ukrainian-Hungarian relations.”

In response to a question from an MTI correspondent whether the situation of Hungarians in Transcarpathia was discussed during talks, Mr. Orbán stated that the issue played a central role in his negotiations in Kyiv. He highlighted that there was agreement between him and the Ukrainian President and Prime Minister on several issues regarding the Hungarian minority in Ukraine. Orbán also indicated that the most important topic the development of the Transcarpathian region since the area has its own potential. Therefore, the joint economic committee will deal with this separately. Besides, the Prime Minister mentioned that the Ukrainian leadership has expressed recognition of the Transcarpathian Hungarian minority's contribution to the development of Ukraine. “I told my Ukrainian partners that we are interested in ensuring that members of the Hungarian community in Ukraine are recognized as valuable and law-abiding citizens of Ukraine,” he noted. “Naturally, there are some difficulties, but we are moving in the direction of

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solving them, as we have not identified a single problem that cannot be resolved”.

Regarding the minority issue, Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov stated that he asked for Viktor Orbán’s support in promoting the use of the Ukrainian language and the enhancement of Ukrainian cultural life among Ukrainians living in Hungary, as well as the continuation of Ukrainian-language television broadcasts. He added that he is very impressed by the determination with which his Hungarian colleague addressed these issues and solving these problems. According to Mr. Azarov, the Ukrainian government is doing everything it can to improve the linguistic and cultural situation of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia.

In response to a journalist’s question regarding Hungary’s support for Ukrainians’ visa-free travel in the EU, Mr. Orbán stated that Hungary is not afraid of Ukrainians, especially since a significant number of Ukrainian citizens arriving to Hungary are of Hungarian ethnicity. As he explained, malicious people will break even the strictest visa system, while well-intentioned and law-abiding people will get stuck. “We want law-abiding people to be able to move freely between countries without obstacles, so during Hungary’s EU presidency, we can take significant steps in the right direction,” the Prime Minister said in conclusion of his press conference in Kyiv.¹¹⁶

116 MTI news archive, November 12, 2010.

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DECEMBER 17, 2010 – PÁL SCHMITT: HUNGARY SUPPORTS UKRAINE IN ITS EFFORTS TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

During a visit to Kyiv on Friday, Hungarian President Pál Schmitt pledged that during its upcoming presidency in the European Union, Hungary will do everything in its power to promote Ukraine's European integration. This statement was made after a meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart, Viktor Yanukovich.

In response to an MTI question, Mr. Yanukovich reiterated his hope that Hungary will contribute to achieving visa-free travel between Ukraine and the European Union as soon as possible, as well as to conclude the free trade agreement. He described the ongoing "gas war" between Russia and Ukraine as shameful and having serious impacts on European consumers. As Ukraine has signed the European Energy Charter and reached an agreement with Russia on gas exports and transit, he promised that such a situation will not occur in the future. Mr. Yanukovich briefly touched on the realization of his election promises to the Hungarian minority in Ukraine and his stance on the Hungarian law regarding dual citizenship.¹¹⁷

117 MTI news archive, December 17, 2010.

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FEBRUARY 10, 2011 – MARTONYI: HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS ON AN UPWARD TRAJECTORY

Hungarian-Ukrainian relations have been developing very positively in recent months and are on “an upward trajectory,” which is evident by recent high-level visits, János Martonyi, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, said on Thursday in Budapest.

Following their negotiations, the minister held a joint press conference with his Ukrainian counterpart Kostyantyn Gryshchenko. He emphasized that Hungary appreciates the steps taken by the “government of President Yanukovich” for Hungarian-language education and hopes that “this trend will continue.” Members of the two countries’ economic joint committees will hopefully meet in the near future and there is a shared will to intensify the work of other joint committees as well, he added.

The Hungarian Foreign Minister reiterated his country’s support Ukraine in moving closer to the European Union with all possible means. In this regard, the upcoming EU presidency places a particular responsibility on Hungary.

Mr. Martonyi stated that Budapest advocates for the implementation of the EU action plan aimed at establishing visa-free travel for Ukraine and also seeks to promote the success of trade negotiations in order to create a “deep and comprehensive” free trade agreement.

According to the minister, Ukraine is the most important player of the EU’s Eastern partnership program. Likewise, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region will also provide an excellent opportunity for cooperation between the two countries.

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Answering a question, Mr. Martonyi explained that they did not discuss the issue of naturalization, as both parties respect that regulations of the two countries differ.

Mr. Hryshchenko added that current Ukrainian legislation does not allow dual citizenship; consequently, any person acquiring the citizenship of another country will lose Ukrainian citizenship.¹¹⁸

APRIL 13, 2011 – HUNGARIAN SOCIETY IS HIGHLY TOLERANT, ACCORDING TO THE HEAD OF THE UKRAINIAN MINORITY SELF-GOVERNMENT OF HUNGARY

According to the head of the Ukrainian Minority Self-Government in Hungary, the Hungarian society is highly tolerant and has a very good relationship with the Ukrainian minority living in the country.

In an interview published on the *mukachevo.net* news portal on Wednesday, Jaroslava Hartyányi said that the Hungarian law on national and ethnic minorities, adopted in 1993, is very progressive, as it provides for local self-government and regular state support for the Ukrainian and Rusyn minorities living in Hungary. She added that Hungarian society has a very good relationship with the Ukrainian community and exhibits high levels of tolerance. As she noted, even Hungarian people who do not speak Ukrainian

118 MTI news archive, February 10, 2011.

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attend Ukrainian literary events, where they are captivated by the atmosphere. The minority leader illustrated the collective helpfulness of Hungarians to Ukrainian readers through an example of a Budapest taxi driver who transported her.

Ms. Hartyányi also claimed that many members of the Ukrainian minority in Hungary, which barely exceeds five thousand, take on public roles. According to her, it was due to their contribution that Hungary officially recognized the 1932-1933 Great Famine, the Holodomor, and that a memorial was built in a park near the Hungarian Parliament to commemorate this tragic historical event. Additionally, she explained that Ukrainian people in Hungary closely cooperate with other minority groups in the country, as they know that only together they can effectively protect their interests.¹¹⁹

SEPTEMBER 27, 2011 – THE HUNGARIAN CHARITY SERVICE OF THE ORDER OF MALTA CONDUCTS SCREENING TESTS IN TRANSCARPATIA

A medical team run by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta has started free screening tests in ethnic Hungarian villages in Transcarpathia.

119 MTI news archive, November 14, 2011..

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Doctors representing the Charity are screening children in villages in the Beregszász (Berehove) area where no medical practices are locally available. Medical teams screen children who sign up for the examination at schools, according to the news portal *karpatalja.ma*.

The team, led by László Szalay, examined the little patients in the villages Bene (Bene) and Sárosoroszi (Orosiyevo) in the recent days as part of the “Vedd fel és láss el” (Put On and See) campaign of the Charity Service. As the head of the medical group pointed out, hundreds of Transcarpathian children receive glasses free of charge thanks to the program. There is a great need for such screenings in Transcarpathia. Although Ukrainian schoolchildren are required to undergo annual health examinations, due to the underfunding of the healthcare system these screenings are not as thorough as the ones carried out by the charity. In addition to the vision screening program, the doctors from Hungary perform all other screenings necessary, including dental and pediatric examinations.¹²⁰

NOVEMBER 14, 2011 – MATERIALS OF THE BEREGSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE) ARCHIVE TO BE DIGITALIZED WITH HUNGARIAN HELP

According to plans, documents stored in the Beregszász (Berehove) branch of the State Archives of the Transcarpathian Oblast are to be digitalized with the support of

120 MTI news archive, September 27, 2011.

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Hungary. At a recent meeting of the Hungarian-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Commission in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), the commission formulated recommendations regarding the digitalization of documents stored in the Beregszász (Berehove) Archives. Therefore, the issue was discussed by János Hóvári, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during his recent visit to Transcarpathia, as reported in the latest issue of the local weekly *Kárpátalja*.

Regarding the planned digitalization, Mr. Hóvári stated to the newspaper that the institution preserving the archival materials of the former Bereg and Ugocsa counties lacks insulation and is damp, causing its condition to deteriorate day by day. “We have been trying to offer our assistance for years,” he said. He added that the leadership of the archive was not a partner for a long time, but now it seems that the situation has changed. According to the Deputy State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, one possible solution could be the digitization of these materials, as it would preserve them for future generations. He believes that proper storage of the materials should also be addressed.

Mr. Hóvári also mentioned that preliminary discussions on the matter are currently under way, adding that he would like staff from the National Archives of Hungary to visit Beregszász (Berehove), as they have done before, over the coming months to prepare a report on the most pressing tasks.¹²¹

121 MTI news archive, November 14, 2011.

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DECEMBER 12, 2011 – MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS JÁNOS MARTONYI ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO KYIV

On Monday, Foreign Minister János Martonyi discussed the development of Ukrainian-Hungarian bilateral relations, support for Ukraine's European integration and the situation of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. The negotiations were part of an official one-day visit to the Ukrainian capital, marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Hungary.

Speaking of his discussions with Ukrainian state and diplomatic to MTI over a telephone connection, Mr. Martonyi explained that issues related to bilateral relations, cooperation within the framework of the European Union, and the situation of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine were reviewed with his Ukrainian colleague Kostyantyn Gryshchenko. The minister described the pace of development in Hungarian-Ukrainian trade relations as promising, noting that figures suggest that trade between the two countries is recovering from the crisis. Additionally, he assured his Ukrainian partners that Hungary continues to support Ukraine's European integration efforts. The Foreign Minister held talks with Volodymyr Lytvyn, Chairman of the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*, and requested the establishment of individual electoral constituencies in Transcarpathia for the 2012 Ukrainian parliamentary elections, in which Hungarian candidates could compete for parliamentary mandates.

Regarding the topic, Mr. Martonyi stated that he generally considers the new mixed electoral system in Ukraine to

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be favorable if it provides an opportunity for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia to regain parliamentary representation. Mr. Lytvyn promised to create an electoral district favorable for Hungarians, Mr. Martonyi said, adding that he also raised the issue with Foreign Minister Gryshchenko.

Mr. Martonyi emphasized that he expressed the need to regulate, preferably through legislation, the issue of Hungarian-language entrance examinations for higher education institutions so that the issue does not have to be addressed annually. He stated that this proposal was also received well by his hosts. He indicated that these issues, along with other matters concerning the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia, will be on the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the Hungarian-Ukrainian intergovernmental committee, starting next Monday. This includes the issue of the maintenance of the Hungarology Center in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) and resolving the situation of the Beregszász (Berehove) Archives. “The signing of the agreement on educational and cultural cooperation agreement with Ukraine, which we advocate for, would bring us closer to solving these issues as well,” he pointed out.

Regarding his negotiations with President Viktor Yanukovich, the Hungarian Foreign Minister stated that the President assured him that Ukraine remains committed to European integration. However, he also indicated that Kyiv faces certain difficulties in this matter, which are primarily related to the impending judicial case involving former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.¹²²

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MARCH 28, 2012 – THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE TO MEET IN VAJA

The Hungarian-Ukrainian intergovernmental joint committee will discuss issues related to rural development, consumer protection and opportunities for cooperation in public health during their two-day meeting in Vaja, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County.

Erika Szabó, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice responsible for regional administration and elections and co-chair of the committee, stated during a press briefing prior to Wednesday's meeting that the committee reconvened last fall after a three-year hiatus.

She added that the most recent committee meeting has already had concrete results, as the Hungarian-Ukrainian border crossing procedure was reviewed in relation to the jointly organized Polish-Ukrainian UEFA European Football Championship with the aim of making border crossings as easy and fast as possible.

122 MTI news archive. Minister of Foreign Affairs, János Martonyi, made an official visit to Kyiv December 12, 2011.

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During previous discussions, the issue of forced resettlement related to the salt mine in Aknaszlatina (Solotvyno) was raised. The State Secretary emphasized that the Hungarian Consul General stationed in Beregszász (Berehove) was involved in the assessment and consultation process with ethnic Hungarian families. As a result, no Hungarian family was forced to move away from the town.

Due to the negligence of the operators of the salt mine in Solotvyno (Aknaszlatina), mine collapses endangered residents in the vicinity. Therefore, the relocation of hundreds of local residents, mostly ethnic Hungarians, was planned.

During the press briefing, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice mentioned that as a result of the discussions held last fall, Hungary and Ukraine signed a declaration of intent on the establishment of the Tisza River Basin Cooperation.¹²³

MAY 14, 2012 – ZSOLT NÉMETH: “WE HAVE OUR INTERESTS IN UKRAINE CHOOSING EUROPE”; EU-RUSSIAN, HUNGARIAN-ROMANIAN RELATIONS

“We have our interests in Ukraine choosing Europe,” Zsolt Németh, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Hungarian journalists after participating in the meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels on

123 MTI news archive, March 28, 2012.

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Monday. The EU will hold an Association Council meeting with Ukraine on Tuesday. The text of the EU-Ukraine association agreement has already been drafted, but the signing is still pending. Mr. Németh pointed out that there is a regression in Ukraine in terms of the rule of law and human rights, and the signing of the Agreement is not expected until there is a noticeable positive change in these aspects.

Parliamentary elections will be held on October 28 in Ukraine; however, according to the Hungarian State Secretary, the Association Agreement will not be signed by then. The elections will serve as a test of the rule of law and democracy, Mr. Németh noted.

He pointed out that issues such as the electoral law and the delimitation of electoral districts are also closely linked to the election day itself. The alteration of ethnic ratios in electoral districts, as unfortunately has been the case in Ukraine, goes against international law, the Hungarian politician said, referring to the fact that electoral districts established by the Central Election Commission do not allow the Hungarians of Transcarpathia to send their own representative to the parliament in Kyiv.

Regarding the case of Yulia Tymoshenko, Mr. Németh stated that the imprisonment of the former Prime Minister is seen by the EU as a humanitarian issue rather than a political one. The Hungarian foreign ministry official also emphasized that the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine is of geopolitical importance, and it is in the EU's interest for the country to strengthen its European relations¹²⁴

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AUGUST 17, 2012 – TRUCKLOAD OF DONATIONS FROM EGER TO NAGYSZŐLŐS (VYNOHRADIV)

The municipality of Eger has sent a truck full of donations, including computers, cribs, and books, to Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) in Transcarpathia, a representative of the mayor's office told MTI on Friday.

The donation package can be delivered to Transcarpathia thanks to the close relationship between the two municipalities, László Zentai said. He stated that the donated equipment will be sent to Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) and further educational institutions in nearby Pyiterfolvo (Tiszapéterfalva) and Perekhrestya (Tiszakeresztúr).

Representatives of the municipality of Eger have visited Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) on several occasions and, seeing the situation there, decided to provide support to the best of their abilities.

Eger plans to continue supporting the Transcarpathian region, and the municipality is happy to receive these donations. There is a particular need for sports equipment, books, furniture, and electric stoves, the spokesman for the mayor's office said.¹²⁵

124 MTI news archive, May 14, 2012.

125 MTI news archive, August 17, 2012

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OCTOBER 12, 2012 – ZSOLT NÉMETH INAUGURATES HUNGARIAN HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATED WITH EU SUPPORT IN UNGVÁR (UZHHOROD)

Zsolt Németh, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, handed over the renovated Hungarian-language Drugeth Secondary School in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) on Friday as part of the EU's Eastern Partnership program.

During the inauguration ceremony, László Brenzovics, vice chairman of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association and member of the Transcarpathian Regional Council who coordinates the Eastern Partnership's institution refurbishment program in Transcarpathia, said that a hundred windows were replaced and the heating system was renovated. Regarding the implementation of the project, he mentioned that a goal has been set to refurbish 73 facilities in Ukrainian region, and so far the modernization of 23 educational institutions has been successfully completed.

In his speech, Ungvár (Uzhhorod) mayor Viktor Pogorelov praised the involvement of the local Hungarian community in the life of the city. He also expressed his gratitude to Hungary for the support provided to the regional capital through various channels.¹²⁶

126 MTI news archive, October 12, 2012.

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NOVEMBER 17, 2012 – FROM JANUARY, NATURAL GAS WILL ARRIVE TO UKRAINE VIA HUNGARY

Yuriy Boyko, the Ukrainian Minister of Energy, announced on the Ukrainian television channel *Inter* that starting from next year, Ukraine will import natural gas from the German company RWE through Hungary. The minister suggested that Ukraine is seeking new opportunities for procuring the necessary amount of natural gas to replace expensive Russian sources. Under the agreement with RWE, the German company will supply Ukraine with 5 billion cubic meters of natural gas starting from early November. According to the contract, Ukraine receives approximately one million cubic meters of gas per day through Poland this year. Starting from January 1, Ukraine will receive the German gas via Hungary.

According to Mr. Boyko, Ukraine is purchasing natural gas from RWE for \$40-70 less than from the Russian state-owned Gazprom. In fact, the gas purchased by Ukraine from the German company will originate from Russia but will be supplied at a significantly lower price due to substantial discounts provided by Russia to Germany. According to earlier information published by the Ukrainian Ministry of Energy, Ukraine currently pays around \$360 per thousand cubic meters for the German shipment coming through Poland.

Based on information published in the Ukrainian press, Ukraine paid \$416 per thousand cubic meters to Gazprom for natural gas in the first quarter of 2012. The price increased to \$425 in the second quarter, \$426 in the third quarter, and reached \$432 in the fourth quarter of that year.

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The Ukrainian state gas company, Naftogaz, paid Gazprom \$1.043 billion for natural gas in October only.

This year, Ukraine plans to purchase only 27 billion cubic meters of gas from Russia. Gazprom is accusing Ukraine of contract violation for sourcing gas from alternative suppliers to compensate for the reduced purchases from Russia, which has threatened with legal action to assert its position. This threat is based on the existing agreement, implying that Ukraine must purchase at least 32 billion cubic meters of gas annually from Russia.

In response to this, Boyko stated on *Inter* that Kyiv is ready to take Russia to court, adding that several European companies have already succeeded in legally persuading Gazprom to reduce the price of natural gas.¹²⁷

127 MTI news archive, November 17, 2012.

2013

MARCH 25, 2013 – DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN FLOOD PROTECTION TELEMETRY SYSTEM COMPLETED

The development of the joint Hungarian-Ukrainian flood monitoring system has been completed. The project was implemented by the Upper-Tisza Regional Environment and Water Directorate in Nyíregyháza and the Tisza River Basin Water Resources Directorate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), with approximately €900,000 in European Union funding.

Gáspár Bodnár, director of the water management authority in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, emphasized during Monday's project-closing conference that the upgraded flood monitoring system holds exceptional significance in preparedness against flood waves. As water level rises on the Upper Tisza river and its tributaries, critical levels can be reached very quickly within twelve to thirty-six hours.

In Ukraine, the equipment of seven automatic precipitation and air temperature measurement stations was replaced, four pumping stations were integrated into the system, and their data collection and transmission were automated.

A video surveillance site was established on the Tisza River near Técső (Tyachiv) in Ukraine, which continuously monitors the drifting ice, debris and possible municipal waste in the river.

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Finally, as part of the project, the implementation of European quality assurance standards was introduced at the Carpathian Basin Water Management Directorate.¹²⁸

MARCH 28, 2013 – AZAROV VISIT: UKRAINE TO IMPORT UP TO 10 BILLION CUBIC METERS OF GAS PER YEAR THROUGH HUNGARY

Budapest and Kyiv are exploring the possibility of importing up to 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually from Europe to Ukraine through Hungarian pipelines, Vitaliy Lukhyanenko, the press secretary of Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, announced at a press briefing in Kyiv on Thursday.

According to the Interfax-Ukraine news agency, currently, approximately 2 billion cubic meters of gas can be transported through the so-called reverse gas flow to Ukraine annually via the Hungarian pipelines. “During consultations between experts from both sides, a technical solution proposal was raised, which suggests that this volume could be increased up to five times, meaning up to 10 billion cubic meters annually,” explained the press secretary when commenting on the outcome of the meetings between Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his Ukrainian colleague, Mykola Azarov.

128 MTI news archive, March 25, 2013.

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During his visit to Budapest, Mr. Azarov announced that the reverse gas delivery from Hungary to Ukraine has started. He jokingly remarked that the first gas molecule had already crossed the border between the two countries on Thursday.

Ukraine agreed with the German company RWE last year to supply 5 billion cubic meters of natural gas until May 2013. According to the Ukrainian news agency UNIAN, the imported quantity can be increased up to a maximum of 10 billion cubic meters under the framework agreement.¹²⁹

APRIL 17, 2013 – HUNGARIAN VISA ISSUANCE PRACTICE EVALUATED FAVORABLY IN UKRAINE

According to the list published by the Ukrainian edition of *Forbes* magazine on Wednesday, Hungary has once again been included among the European Union countries that are loyal in issuing Schengen visas to Ukrainian citizens.

According to the online edition of the magazine, the NGO Europe Without Barriers it reported that European Union member states issued a total of 1.28 million Schengen visas to Ukrainian citizens in 2012. The number of rejected applications decreased by one percentage point compared to the previous year, reaching 2.03 percent.

129 MTI news archive, March 28, 2013.

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The organization evaluated countries based on several criteria, such as visa fees, processing time, number of required documents and rejection rate. According to the overall ranking, Hungary is on the fourth place after Estonia, Slovakia, and Poland. When considering visa application processing, the four countries are in a tie. However, Hungary performed worse than the other three countries in terms of the number of required documents. With regard to the number of rejections, Hungary ranked third, surpassing Poland. Data suggests that Hungarian consulates in Ukraine rejected only 1.1 percent of visa applications last year.

Among the countries considered least “friendly” towards Ukrainians, Italy ranked first, followed by the Czech Republic in second place. Regarding the latter, the magazine noted that Prague has made a sharp change in its visa policy towards Ukraine, as the number of visas issued by the Czech Republic decreased by a third to 74,000 compared to the previous year. According to information obtained by *Forbes*, Ukrainian travel agencies are complaining about facing increasing difficulties in obtaining tourist visas for Czech Republic.

Following the usual pattern, the United Kingdom ranked third worst, primarily due to its high visa fee of €124.¹³⁰

130 MTI news archive, April 17, 2013.

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OCTOBER 1, 2013 – UKRAINE RECEIVED OVER 40 PERCENT MORE GAS THANKS TO HUNGARY

Ukraine imported approximately 334.2 million cubic meters of natural gas from Europe through Hungary and Poland in September, which is 41.5% more than in August, according to Ukrainian media citing data from the Hungarian FGSZ Ltd. and the Polish GAZ-SYSTEM company.

Approximately 95.9 million cubic meters of natural gas arrived in Ukraine through Poland last month, compared to 105.4 million cubic meters in August, as there was a suspension of deliveries between September 1 and 3 due to maintenance work.

Meanwhile, due to the modernization of Hungarian pipelines, the daily capacity increased from 6.1 to 9 million cubic meters. As a result, 238.3 million cubic meters of natural gas arrived to Ukraine from Hungary in September, compared to 131.2 million cubic meters in the previous month.

In the first nine months of 2013, Ukraine imported nearly 1.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Europe; of this quantity, 809.2 million cubic meters came from Poland and 680 million cubic meters came from Hungary. Naf-togaz, the Ukrainian state-owned company, purchased natural gas from the German gas supplier RWE, which acquires gas from Russia. Ukraine paid an average of \$393.38 per thousand cubic meters for gas delivered through reverse supplies from Europe, paying \$416.33 per thousand cubic meters for gas purchased directly from Russia this year.¹³¹

131 MTI news archive, October 1, 2013.

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NOVEMBER 4, 2013 – ZSOLT NÉMETH: EASTERN PARTNER-SHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO BE COMPLETED SOON IN TRANSCARPATHIA

Zsolt Németh, the Hungarian Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced at a press conference in Budapest on Monday that the Eastern Partnership Development Program in Transcarpathia will soon be completed, with both Hungary and Ukraine contributing \$1 million to the project.

During his visit to Transcarpathia this week, the State Secretary reported that, based on the agreement signed with the Transcarpathian Oblast Council last summer, 56 educational, cultural, and public institutions used by Hungarians have been renovated. He emphasized that this initiative involved most Hungarian-populated areas in Transcarpathia, noting that the partnership program contributed to the renovation of the theater in Beregszász (Berehove).

Among the 56 refurbished institutions, Mr. Németh put emphasis on the renovation of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education in Beregszász (Berehove). He mentioned that the lengthy development took several years to complete involved the replacement of roof tiles and windows, as well as the renovation of the facade of the 6,000-square-meter building.

Mr. Németh also pointed out it was in this building that Prime Minister Viktor Orbán signed a strategic cooperation agreement between the Hungarian state and the college in April.

The State Secretary expressed his hope to reach an agreement with the leaders of the Transcarpathian region to

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continue this cooperation, creating a kind of “post-Vilnius Eastern Partnership.” This time, the focus would be on the renovation of the State Archives in Beregszász (Berehove), he said.

The State Secretary reminded that Hungary has established joint committees with Ukraine on economic affairs, cross-border issues and minority rights. He stated that “we have witnessed a diplomatic high season in Budapest last week,” which will continue in the upcoming weeks in Budapest and other European cities.

He stated that a key focus of these negotiations is for Ukraine to sign the Association Agreement with the EU at the Vilnius summit later this month. Hungary is committed to supporting this agreement as it can facilitate the access of Hungarian products to the Ukrainian market.

The Hungarian politician emphasized that Ukraine had reached a crossroads and must decide whether to join the Russian customs union or the European single market. Ukraine has apparently decided to choose the latter option, provoking a rather harsh reaction from the Russian side. Moldova and Georgia are in a similar situation as well.

The Eastern Partnership is an initiative launched by the EU in 2009 with the aim of deepening the EU’s relations with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.¹³²

132 MTI news archive, November 4, 2013.

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NOVEMBER 6, 2013 – NAVRACSICS: UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS THE BEST THEY HAVE BEEN IN TWENTY YEARS

Hungarian-Ukrainian relations are currently the best they have been in the past twenty years, Tibor Navracsics, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration and Justice, told MTI on Wednesday based on negotiations during his visit to Kyiv.

The Deputy Prime Minister was present and delivered a speech at a Kyiv conference organized by the World Economic Forum (WEF). In addition, he held bilateral meetings with Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, Minister of Justice Olena Lukash, and Minister of Internal Affairs Vitaliy Zakharchenko.

Mr. Navracsics agreed with the Ukrainian Prime Minister on the need to sign the agreement for the establishment of the Croatian-Hungarian-Ukrainian gas corridor as soon as possible in order to ensure the stable supply of energy in the region.

Mr. Azarov assured his negotiating partner that the accreditation process of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education will be completed in November, thereby stabilizing the situation of the educational institution.

Additionally, parties discussed infrastructure development related to Hungarian-Ukrainian border crossings. Mr. Navracsics received assurance from Prime Minister Azarov that the Ukrainian side will provide a state guarantee for the road construction project near Beregsurány on the Hungarian side of the border and the investment will be realized as soon as possible with a loan provided by Eximbank.

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The project includes the construction of the approximately 25-kilometer-long road section in Ukraine, which will enable faster border crossings in a more modern environment. The focus of the meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Olena Lukash were Ukraine's legislative obligations regarding its European Union association. Mr. Navracsics explained that with the signing of the Association Agreement, Ukraine needs to align its legal and judicial system with EU law and its application. In this regard, he offered the assistance of the Hungarian Ministry of Public Administration and Justice in sharing experiences, organizing conferences and professional workshops, and providing training for Ukrainian experts.¹³³

NOVEMBER 30, 2013 – EU-UKRAINE: THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS CONDEMNS BREAKUP OF DEMONSTRATION IN KYIV

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the dispersal of the pro-European protests in Kyiv and the use of violence in general in Ukraine, a press statement released on Saturday reads. The declaration stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed concern over the fact that the Ukrainian police forcefully dispersed the peaceful protest of young people on Kyiv's main square early Saturday morning.

133 MTI news archive, November 6, 2013.

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The protesters raised their voices in support of Ukraine's integration with the European Union and the signing of the Association Agreement. "We condemn the actions of the police and consider it important that the events be thoroughly investigated and those responsible be identified," the ministry wrote in its statement.

Freedom of speech is a universal human value, and respecting it is an important foundation of a democratic society. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects the leadership of Ukraine to ensure freedom of speech and the right of assembly for its citizens, according to the statement, which calls on the Ukrainian authorities and all parties involved to refrain from using violence and to enable peaceful expression of opinions by the protesters.

The special units of the Ukrainian police forcefully dispersed pro-European protesters demonstrating on Kyiv's main square on Saturday morning. According to news agency reports, police attacked the protesters with batons and tear gas grenades. The protesters demanded the signing of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine, as well as the resignation of President Viktor Yanukovich.

Mr. Yanukovich expressed his outrage over the violent turn of the EU-oriented protest and pledged that those responsible will face punishment.¹³⁴

134 MTI news archive, November 30, 2013.

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DECEMBER 18, 2013 – ZSOLT NÉMETH: HUNGARY CONTRIBUTES \$500,000 TO THE RENOVATION OF TRANSCARPATHIAN INSTITUTIONS

Zsolt Németh, the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced at a Budapest press conference on Wednesday that Hungary will contribute half a million dollars towards the renovation of educational and cultural institutions in Transcarpathia until the end of 2014.

The Hungarian State Secretary signed a cooperation agreement with President of the Transcarpathian Regional Council Ivan Baloha and László Brenzovics, head of the charity foundation of the Hungarian Teachers' Training College in Carpathian Ukraine, on Hungarian funding for projects of the EU Eastern Partnership program in 2013-2014.

After signing the agreement, Mr. Németh stated that the parties had signed a similar agreement a year and a half ago in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), thanks to which a fruitful cooperation had developed between Hungary and Ukraine in the Transcarpathia region of Ukraine. Under the previous agreement, Hungary supported the renovation and energy efficiency improvement of 56 institutions with a contribution of \$1 million.

He noted that higher education institutions such as the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College in Beregszász (Berehove), the Hungarian faculty of Uzhhorod National University, will receive special support, together with the State Archives in Beregszász (Berehove).

Mr. Németh emphasized that there has been ample discussion about the Eastern Partnership following the Vilnius Summit in November. This initiative also has its “everyday

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aspects,” suggesting that Hungary has recently established practical-minded cooperation with Transcarpathia. He added that Hungary supports an independent, sovereign and strong Ukraine, and the current agreement also underpins this stance. According to Tuesday’s news, Russia is selling gas to Ukraine at a 30 percent lower price. The heating bills of institutions renovated with the support of Hungary have decreased by 45 percent, which is Hungary’s contribution to “strengthening Ukraine’s energy sovereignty,” he pointed out.

The State Secretary stated that the relations between Hungary and Ukraine have evidently developed in recent years, and a particularly friendly relationship has been established with Transcarpathia. In Ukraine’s European integration process, Transcarpathia has been acting as a kind of “locomotive,” pulling the country along. Hopefully, Ukraine’s European integration will continue, Mr. Németh added.

Mr. Baloha pointed out that the previous agreement within the framework of the European Partnership was signed in 2012 at the initiative of Zsolt Németh, and the renovations realized as a result have proven to be highly useful. He said that this successful cooperation will hopefully continue under the present agreement and Hungary’s support is an “extraordinary gift to the entire Transcarpathian community.”

László Brenzovics talked about how the program is one of the most successful examples of cooperation between Transcarpathia and Hungary, resulting in improved living conditions for thousands of young people, students and teachers. The charity foundation of Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpath-

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ian Hungarian College led renovations carried out under the previous program and will continue to do so under the current scheme, he announced, adding that the foundation is fulfilling its mission by strengthening relations between countries and nations.¹³⁵

135 MTI news archive, December 18, 2013.

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JANUARY 31, 2014 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: SYNAGOGUE IN BEREKSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE) TO BE RENOVATED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

The Hungarian government will support the renovation of the small synagogue in Beregszász (Berehove) with HUF 13 million, allowing the building to be completely renewed by July, the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told MTI on Friday.

The renovation of the building began in the fall of 2012, when its survival became doubtful due to its deteriorating condition, Zsolt Németh said, adding that the ministry provided HUF 2 million in support for the Panorama Cultural Foundation of Transcarpathia for the renovation of the synagogue's roof structure through a grant announced for the establishment and renovation of Hungarian memorial sites and monuments abroad.

The external restoration was completed by the end of November 2013, and the renovation continues with the reconstruction of the interior and the arrangement of the front garden. The local community has also made a significant contribution to the project, Mr. Németh added.

The renovation of the synagogue was completed with the support of the Beregszász (Berehove)-based Shalom Foundation, which won a HUF 10 million grant in December 2013 through the Holocaust Memorial Year – Civic Fund 2014 program, established by the Prime Minister's Office.

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The State Secretary explained that this is supplemented by HUF 1 million provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹³⁶

FEBRUARY 24, 2014 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS: MEDICAL AID SHIPMENT DELIVERED TO KYIV BY HUNGARIAN ECUMENICAL CHARITY

On Monday, a medical aid shipment from the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity arrived in Kyiv. The delivery was received by Nataliya Soloyko, the head of the healthcare service which operates in the health center established by opposition protesters at St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery.

László Lehel, the organization's director and chairman who led the delegation, told an MTI correspondent in Kyiv that with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they purchased essential medicines, disinfectants and hospital equipment locally for a total value of HUF 2 million. According to Mr. Lehel, the aid was appreciated and that the Ukrainian public is aware that Hungary stands in solidarity with the victims of the clashes.

The Hungarian charity has already provided humanitarian help last week, worth half a million forints, for the care of the wounded in Kyiv. László Lehel emphasized that they will continue their fundraising efforts in Hungary, as the organization intends to provide further assistance.

¹³⁶ MTI news archive, January 31, 2014.

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Mihály Bayer, the Hungarian Ambassador to Kyiv, was also present at the handover of the shipment. He stated that the Hungarian government has expressed its concerns several times regarding the situation in Ukraine over the past two and a half months.

“We have advised our partners to resolve the crisis peacefully, without violence. We regret that this did not happen, but as a neighboring country, we feel the need to take action to alleviate the pain of the victims and the sick as an expression of our solidarity,” the ambassador added.

Since the beginning of the clashes, a field hospital, healthcare center, and first aid station, equipped with an operating room, have been set up on the premises of the St. Michael Monastery, which belongs to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate. The medical donations are stored on shelves in military tents set up on the monastery’s grounds.¹³⁷

MARCH 6, 2014 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS: HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR TO UKRAINE HANDS OVER SHIPMENT OF HUNGARIAN MEDICAL AID IN KYIV

The 1.3-ton aid shipment with first aid supplies and medicines, which Foreign Minister János Martonyi brought with him to the Ukrainian capital during the visit of the foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group on February 28, 2014, was

137 MTI news archive, February 24, 2014.

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put together with contributions from pharmaceutical firms Richter Gedeon and Béres, the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, according to a statement disclosed to MTI.

Mr. Bayer handed over the aid shipment to the Maidan healthcare center. Accordingly, Nataliya Soloyko, the head of the service's pharmaceutical department, expressed her gratitude to the Hungarian people, as well as to Hungary for its support. She stated that the assistance arrived at the right time as the pharmacies in the Ukrainian capital had been emptied during the violent events.

This is the second time that Hungary provides humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian healthcare services for the treatment of those injured during the protests in Ukraine. Previously, on February 24, 2014, Hungary sent medicines and blood plasma worth \$10,000 to Ukraine through the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity. Furthermore, the Hungarian government has allocated an additional HUF 30 million for the medical treatment and rehabilitation of the wounded.¹³⁸

MARCH 7, 2014 – EPP CONGRESS – ORBÁN: WE WANT PEACE
INSTEAD OF CHAOS IN UKRAINE

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán promoted Ukraine's European integration and urged for a solution to the cri-

138 MTI news archive, March 6, 2014.

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sis in his speech at the European People's Party congress in Dublin on Friday. Europe must stand up for democratic values even after the Ukrainian elections, the Prime Minister emphasized. Regarding the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, he said that “instead of chaos, we want democracy; instead of violence, negotiations; and instead of chaos and anarchy, we want order and peace”.

Mr. Orbán made clear that Hungary's interests lie in a democratic Ukraine where the rights of minorities are respected. Therefore, Hungary strongly condemns the recent Ukrainian parliamentary decision that abolished the language law, which he considers a major failure.

The Prime Minister urged the People's Party to develop a clear position on the situation in Ukraine. He suggested that it is not enough to be satisfied with the departure of the previous Ukrainian leadership; it is equally important to clarify the expectations towards the new government that will emerge after elections in Kyiv.

Likewise, he requested Europe to take responsive measures due to Russia's actions, stating that the violation of international laws cannot go unnoticed. However, Europe cannot respond with military actions, but it can implement an effective integration policy, reaffirmed the Prime Minister.

In this case, words and promises are not enough, he stated: “we must start the European integration process of Ukraine now”.

Finally, Viktor Orbán reiterated his stance on Thursday's Brussels statement, which he presented at the extraordinary EU summit on the issue of Ukraine. According to which, the

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possibility of visa-free travel to the European Union should be available for Ukrainian citizens.¹³⁹

MARCH 16, 2014 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS – SZABOLCS TAKÁCS: IT IS CENTRAL EUROPE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO STAND UP FOR THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE

Following a conference held in Poland, Szabolcs Takács, Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told MTI on Sunday that after 25 years of independence and freedom, it is the responsibility of Central Europe to support and stand by the right for the freedom expression and choice of the Ukrainian people.

He explained that the conference held in Jasionka was organized by the Polish European Funds Foundation, the largest foundation in Poland, under the title "A Quarter Century of Freedom in Europe." The panel discussion was attended by Jerzy Buzek, former Polish Prime Minister and former President of the European Parliament, as well as former Lithianiam President Vytautas Landsbergis and the Hungarian Deputy State Secretary. The discussion focused on expressing solidarity with Ukraine and commemorating the 25th anniversary of the victory of the Polish Solidarity movement and Polish independence.

139 MTI news archive, March 7, 2014.

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Mr. Takács emphasized the importance of European countries expressing their solidarity with Ukraine in the current tense and escalated situation, particularly before the Crimean referendum.

He stated that most participants of the conference expressed their commitment to the freedom, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Mr. Takács added that there was also a consensus that Sunday's referendum in Crimea should be considered illegitimate and a development that undermines the stability of Ukraine. Moreover, it also raises concerns for the region and over potentially triggering questionable processes, he added.

He also mentioned that if there was any positive outcome of the Ukrainian crisis, it was the significant increase in the weight and visibility of the Central European, specifically the Visegrád cooperation. Additionally, he indicated that the countries involved have adopted numerous documents and declarations regarding the situation in the recent weeks. He described it as a significant achievement that the role of Central Europe has increased in this situation.

Mr. Takács stated that Hungary intends to assist the Ukrainian leadership in building a Ukraine that meets European principles and norms. He indicated that during a bilateral meeting, he drew the attention of Yuriy Sergeyev, Representative of Ukraine, to the fact that the Hungarian government supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine. At the same time, Hungary expects the Ukrainian government to enact laws that consider the rights and situation of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, including the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. In 1994, Mr. Sergeyev

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was the Ukrainian ambassador to Washington at the time of the signing of the Budapest Memorandum, which addressed the status of the Crimean Peninsula. Currently, he is a member of the Ukrainian Prime Minister's advisory board.

The political director mentioned that the issue of the new Ukrainian language law was also discussed during the bilateral meeting. In this regard, he spoke about the acquired rights of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, including the freedom of language use, which is important for preserving the cultural and linguistic identity.

Failing to enable this could undermine the legitimacy of the emerging modern Ukraine, he added, pointing out that ethnic minorities' and communities' lack of a sense of safety in Ukraine could lead to destabilization.

Finally, he stated that he offered the assistance of experts in the development of a new Ukrainian language law and a minority protection law.¹⁴⁰

MARCH 16, 2014 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: REFERENDUM IN CRIMEA ILLEGITIMATE AND ILLEGAL

The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers the referendum held in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea illegitimate and illegal, and therefore refuses to recognize its result. The referendum was held on March 16 in violation of the Ukrainian constitution.

140 MTI news archive, March 16, 2014.

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The Ministry reiterated its previous position that Hungary is fully committed to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The Hungarian foreign ministry appealed to all parties involved in the Ukrainian crisis to “refrain from provocative actions that could lead to increased tensions and the use of violence. This includes decisions that endanger the sense of security and legal certainty of national, ethnic, and linguistic minorities living in Ukraine, with particular emphasis on the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, which is of special importance to Hungary”. It stated that the Russian side is urged by Hungary to refrain from the further escalation of the crisis and instead initiate negotiations with the Ukrainian government as soon as possible to find a resolution, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by international mediation.¹⁴¹

MARCH 19, 2014 – CRIMEA – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: STATUS CHANGE OF CRIMEA ILLEGAL

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reaffirming its position on Sunday’s Crimean referendum, considers the change in the status of Crimea to be illegitimate and illegal.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Ministry stressed that by signing the accession agreement between

141 MTI news archive, March 16, 2014.

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the Russian Federation, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and representatives of the city of Sevastopol, Russia has seriously violated international legal norms and deepened the conflict with Ukraine by annexing Crimea.

Once again, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated that Hungary is committed to the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

On Tuesday, the Russian-Crimean agreement on the accession of the self-proclaimed independent Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation was signed in Moscow. Western leaders and the Ukrainian government branded the agreement illegal and criticized Moscow, while Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the West of Cold War rhetoric and referred to Crimea as an inseparable part of Russia.¹⁴²

MARCH 31, 2014 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS – MARTONYI: BUDAPEST SUPPORTS ALL EU SANCTIONS

The Hungarian government fully supports any punitive measures introduced by the European Union against Russia in relation to the Ukrainian crisis. Likewise, Budapest's policy aligns with that of its European partners, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs said on Sunday in an interview with *CNN*.

142 MTI news archive, March 19, 2014.

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János Martonyi was featured on the *CNN* program “Fareed Zakaria GPS,” hosted by news anchor Fareed Zakaria on Sundays, together with his Swedish colleague Carl Bildt.

According to Mr. Bildt, President Putin has adopted a new approach to achieve his goals regarding Ukraine, which he set out last summer when he triggered the crisis. The Russian leader is seeking to force Ukraine back under the control of the Kremlin, and to achieve this, he has embarked a series of maneuvers; the occupation of Crimea is just the latest example. President Putin is now attempting a somewhat more diplomatic approach. There is a solution, but it will not be easy. In any case, Russia must naturally fully accept the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, Mr. Bildt said.

According to the Swedish Foreign Minister, Putin is seeking a kind of pact with the West to impose certain restrictions on Ukraine’s integration with the European Union or to somehow divide Ukrainian citizens, which he believes “will not work.” “We are navigating a track of constraints and we must not be naive about what is at stake. The peace and stability of Europe, and to some extent the world, is at stake,” he argued. Mr. Zakaria asked Mr. Martonyi why Hungary, including the country’s Prime Minister, has expressed concerns and even opposition regarding the sanctions if the stakes are as high as his Swedish colleague claims. He indicated that he understands that Hungary has extensive trade relations with Russia, but so does Poland.

The Hungarian Foreign Minister, in response to this, stated that he disagrees with the statement that the Hungarian Prime Minister or the government does not fully support

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any of the sanctions that the EU has already decided to introduce. “There was complete unity both in the Council of Foreign Ministers and in the European Council of heads of state and government,” he said.

He explained that what the host referred to was the possible third phase of EU sanctions, which involves more impactful economic measures. Budapest and others believe that the application of such measures should be avoided. The question is how to avoid them, he added.

According to Mr. Martonyi, first the uncertainty regarding Russia’s intentions must be brought to an end. Moscow needs to provide assurances that the Russian military will not cross the Ukrainian border and further escalate the already serious conflict.

The Foreign Minister also emphasized that potential economic sanctions against Russia would affect EU member states to varying degrees, and therefore, the resulting burdens need to be shared.¹⁴³

APRIL 10, 2014 – MARTONYI: HUNGARY IS READY TO DELIVER GAS TO UKRAINE

Hungary is ready to deliver gas to Ukraine and the technical conditions for this are in place, Foreign Minister János Martonyi said upon welcoming Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Danylo Lubkivsky on Thursday. According to a

143 MTI news archive, March 31, 2014.

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statement sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the MTI, the Minister assured his guest that Hungary remains committed to the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

During the meeting, Mr. Martonyi reaffirmed that Ukraine is a highly important neighboring partner for Hungary since its independence. Hungary supports the Ukrainian government's efforts for the stabilization of the country. Moreover, it considers the annexation of the Crimea Peninsula to be illegitimate and illegal.

The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated concern over the recent developments in eastern Ukraine and repeatedly expressed the position of the heads of state and government of the European Union. He emphasized that the potential further escalation of the conflict could have serious consequences for the relations between the European Union and Russia.

Mr. Martonyi drew the attention of the Ukrainian Deputy Minister to the special responsibility of the Hungarian government towards the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia. He added that their security and well-being are of particular importance to Hungary. "We condemn any statement that questions the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other countries for simple political gain and disregards the interests and expectations of the Hungarian community living in those countries," Mr. Martonyi said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Daniel Lubkivsky confirmed that Ukraine highly appreciates Hungary's "unwavering position regarding Ukraine." He stated that they approach the development of minority language regulations with caution and in accordance with European norms.

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Mr. Martonyi confirmed that the technical conditions for reverse gas deliveries from Hungary to Ukraine are in place, and they “are ready to start at any time”. According to the Russian news agency TASS, referencing a well-informed source, Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a letter to the leaders of countries that purchase Russian natural gas regarding the critical situation that has arisen due to the Ukrainian gas debt and its potential impact on the gas transmitted to Europe through Ukraine.¹⁴⁴

APRIL 14, 2014 – EMERGENCY PATIENT CARE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED BY THE HUNGARIAN ECUMENICAL CHARITY IN UKRAINE

The Transcarpathian office of the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity is implementing a healthcare infrastructure development project through the Advance Counseling and Development Center of Transcarpathia which will benefit approximately 300,000 residents. The project is being carried out in Beregszász (Berehove) and Ivano-Frankivsk with the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On Monday, Advance director János Gerevich received a donation of HUF 5 million from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Hungarian Consulate in Beregszász (Berehove). The donation will be used to improve emergency and primary healthcare services in the town and the surrounding district, as well as in Ivano-Frankivsk.

144 MTI news archive, April 10, 2014.

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According to the expert, 32 rural clinics will receive medical kits containing life-saving equipment and essential instruments for primary healthcare in the coming weeks as part of the development program. Additionally, the children's clinic in Ivano-Frankivsk is to receive two new examination monitors.

As part of the development of emergency-rehabilitation capacities, medical kits will be equipped with various instruments including manual ventilators, blood pressure monitors, blood glucose meters and various medications. The pediatric examination machines perform eight different measurements, and the compilation of their results significantly helps in establishing a diagnosis and implementing appropriate treatment.

One of the biggest challenges regarding healthcare in Beregszász (Berehove) and the adjacent administrative district is the lack of sufficient ambulances for emergency cases, compounded by the poor condition of local roads. As a result, it becomes practically impossible for paramedics to reach even nearby villages within the designated timeframe. Consequently, the acquisition of 32 life-saving medical kits can significantly increase the chances of survival for critically ill patients.¹⁴⁵

145 MTI news archive, April 14, 2014.

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APRIL 22, 2014 – UKRAINE: HUNGARIAN VISA CENTER TO OPEN IN KYIV

A Hungarian visa center is opening in Kyiv to provide a higher level of service to Ukrainian clients, the Hungarian embassy informed MTI.

The center will start accepting visa applications from April 25 onwards. Appointments will not be required for submitting applications. The visa center accepts applications from individuals residing in Ukraine with any citizenship, except for those who require a D-visa for obtaining a residence permit. The latter can still only submit at the consular office of the embassy.

The visa center is operated by the London-based VFS Global, which charges a service fee of 20 euros for receiving, processing, and delivering the applications. Visa fees remain unchanged.

After the opening of the center, visa applications can still be submitted at the consular office of the embassy by prior registration, either through phone or online.

If demanded by the public, Hungarian Schengen visa application centers may open in other major cities in Ukraine in the future to provide opportunities for more Ukrainian citizens to submit their visa applications.¹⁴⁶

146 MTI news archive, April22, 2014.

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MAY 26, 2014 – UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION – ZSOLT NÉMETH: PETRO POROSHENKO'S POPULARITY STRENGTHENS THE LEGITIMACY OF THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

The clear and convincing popularity of newly elected Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko strengthens the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government, Zsolt Németh, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said after evaluating the Ukrainian presidential election on Sunday.

Hungary continues to support the territorial integrity, sovereignty and stability of Ukraine, as well as the enhancement of democracy, Mr. Németh pointed out. He added that the agreement between President Poroshenko and László Brenzovics will hopefully be implemented as soon as possible to strengthen the country's democratic character. The agreement was concluded by Mr. Brenzovics, chairman of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association, to expand the rights of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

(In early May, the Hungarian organization reached an electoral agreement with Petro Poroshenko, the most promising candidate of the Ukrainian presidential election. According to the agreement, Mr. Poroshenko, as President, undertakes to ensure the language rights of Hungarians in Transcarpathia, improve the Hungarian-language education system, facilitate the consideration of the interests of the Hungarian community during the territorial-administrative reform in Ukraine, and commits to considering the possibility of parliamentary representation for the Hungarian community in Ukraine, in return for the Association's support.)

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Mr. Németh also mentioned that the successful conduct of the election was unfortunately hindered in two regions. However, even in these areas, voter turnout was significant “despite threats” and incidents of disturbance remained isolated. Therefore, these disruptions did not influence the final outcome of the election.

On the other hand, pro-Russian separatists prevented the opening of several polling stations in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.¹⁴⁷

MAY 30, 2014 – MEDICAL EQUIPMENT DELIVERED BY THE HUNGARIAN ECUMENICAL CHARITY TO BEREKSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE)

On Friday, the Transcarpathian Office of the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity, the Advance Counseling and Development Center of Transcarpathia, handed over sixty life-saving medical kits and patient monitors in a ceremonial setting in Berekszász (Berehove). The recipients of these equipment were family physicians working in the Berekszász (Berehove) and Volovets (Volóc) districts, as well as the children’s hospital in Ivano-Frankivsk. The equipment was obtained by Advance through a HUF 5 million grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of the project “Development of Emergency and Primary Healthcare in Transcarpathia and Ivano-Frankivsk to address the urgent reha-

147 MTI news archive, May 26, 2014.

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bilitation phase of the Ukrainian crisis.” In addition to kits purchased for family physicians in Transcarpathia, the Ivano-Frankivsk regional children’s hospital received two modern, multifunctional patient monitors. In the Beregszász (Berehove) district, one of the biggest challenges in health-care, and particularly in emergency cases, is the lack of a sufficient number of ambulances and poor road conditions. Therefore, the paramedics face an almost impossible task of reaching nearby villages within the specified time frame. Consequently, the acquisition of 58 life-saving medical kits can significantly increase the survival chances of critically ill patients. Additionally, family physicians serving villages near the Verecke (Veretskyi) Pass received two medical kits as well.

At the handover ceremony held at Berehove Central District Hospital, Advance director János Gerevich stated that the medical kits are equipped with various items, including a manual ventilator, a blood pressure monitor, a blood glucose meter and various medications. Instruments used for the examination of newborns in Ivano-Frankivsk perform eight different measurements, significantly improving the diagnosis and application of appropriate treatment, he added.

József Bacskai, the head of the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), who was involved in the implementation of the project, emphasized that the Hungarian government’s healthcare donation arrived in Ukraine at the most appropriate time.

He highlighted that the medical equipment handed over in Beregszász (Berehove), together with other similar ship-

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ments Hungarian aid that were delivered earlier, serves to strengthen the close and friendly relations between the two countries and their people.

The diplomat also informed the press that on Thursday, medical equipment purchased with a HUF 1 million grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was handed over by the Transcarpathian staff of the Charity Service of the Order of Malta to the emergency medical service of the city of Lviv. The project through which the charity purchased and handed over healthcare equipment worth HUF 4 million to those in need in Beregszász (Berehove) and the surrounding villages, was also supported by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project aims to facilitate home care and rehabilitation services, Hungary's Consul-General in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) said.¹⁴⁸

JUNE 23, 2014 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS – NAVRACSICS: HUNGARY ALSO WANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EU MISSION IN UKRAINE

Hungary intends to participate in the Ukrainian civil EU mission working on consolidating the rule of law, Minister of Foreign Affairs Tibor Navracsics told Hungarian journalists on Monday in Luxembourg, following the meeting of EU foreign ministers.

148 MTI news archive, May 30, 2014.

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The ministers decided that the EU will create a non-military mission, largely consisting of law enforcement professionals, under the common security and defense policy. This will support the reform of Ukrainian civil security agencies with advice, professional guidance, and training, and improve the readiness of the police, national guard, and other law enforcement agencies.

Tibor Navracsics told reporters that Hungary intends to send experts to the mission, which is expected to consist of around fifty professionals. The minister expressed that it is in Hungary's fundamental interest to have a territorially intact Ukraine that respects democratic norms, the rule of law, and constitutional principles.

“This provides us the opportunity to ensure the rights of the Hungarian minority living in Ukraine,” the head of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated. He also mentioned that Hungary can play a significant role in Ukraine's gas supply through the Hungarian-Ukrainian interconnector, and even become the country's biggest supplier, thus contributing to the preservation of Ukraine's stability. In their statement, the EU foreign ministers reaffirmed that the EU does not recognize the Russian annexation of Crimea.

In response to a question from MTI, Mr. Navracsics stated that during the meeting, the issue of further restrictive sanctions against Russia was primarily raised by the UK, as well as by Sweden and the Baltic states. However, the majority did not support the proposal.¹⁴⁹

149 MTI news archive, June 23, 2014.

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OCTOBER 8, 2014 – UKRAINE CRISIS – HUNGARIAN ECUMENICAL CHARITY DELIVERS AID TO WAR REFUGEES IN WESTERN UKRAINE

The Hungarian Ecumenical Charity delivered humanitarian aid worth HUF 1 million to families fleeing from conflict in eastern Ukraine, calling at Beregszász (Berehove) And Ivano-Frankivsk. Furthermore, the organization distributed educational kits among disadvantaged primary-school children in the Transcarpathian region on Wednesday.

László Lehel, the organization's leader, emphasized that the charity maintains close relationships with civil organizations in Ivano-Frankivsk, which have provided support to families displaced by the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Following the assessment of needs, the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity will distribute winter clothing, blankets, and bedding sets to 70 families from eastern Ukraine in the western Ukrainian city on Thursday. According to Mr. Lehel, civil organizations in Ivano-Frankivsk perform their tasks excellently due to the training of staff members through an international training project conducted by the Charity and Advance. This project took place last year in Transcarpathia and Hungary, focusing on the Hungarian methods of handling emergency and disaster situations. Mr. Lehel pointed out that trained activists immediately had to put into practice what they learned from Hungarian professionals. The results of their activities so far prove that the methods acquired in Hungary are also effective in Ukraine, he added.¹⁵⁰

150 MTI news archive, October 8, 2014.

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OCTOBER 30, 2014 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS: HUNGARY HOSTS TEN UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

Hungary is hosting ten Ukrainian soldiers for medical care, the press service of the Ukrainian embassy in Budapest disclosed on Thursday according to the Ukrainian news portal *RBC Ukraine*.

The statement released by the embassy claimed that an agreement has been reached to provide medical treatment to ten Ukrainian soldiers at the “Hungarian Defence Forces’ healthcare center.”

As part of the agreement, three Ukrainian soldiers arrived in Hungary on Tuesday for medical rehabilitation, and the arrival of seven more soldiers is expected at the military healthcare facility, *RBC Ukraine* reported.¹⁵¹

151 MTI news archive, October 30, 2014.

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JANUARY 12, 2015 – HUNGARY RESUMES SUPPLYING GAS TO UKRAINE

The gas delivery from Hungary to Ukraine has started, Natural Gas Transmission Ltd. has confirmed in response to an announcement made by Ukrainian gas distributor Ukrtransgaz, MTI reports.

According to information available on the official website of the Hungarian gas transmission company, approximately 2.6 million cubic meters of natural gas arrived in Ukraine from Hungary on Saturday.

On September 25 last year, FGSZ announced the temporary suspension of natural gas deliveries to Ukraine through pipelines independent from the “Testvériség” pipeline as there was an increase in supply demand from system users. Prior to that, only 3-4 million cubic meters of natural gas per day were being delivered from Hungary to Ukraine instead of the maximum capacity of 16.8 million cubic meters.

On December 29, FGSZ announced that starting from January 1, 2015, natural gas supplies to Ukraine will be resumed based on applicable technical and commercial conditions, with the possibility of suspension. According to the information received from network users, the resumption of gas deliveries became possible because increased demand is no longer expected at the Beregdaróc. Therefore, the restoration of the interconnector to its status prior to September 25, 2014 has become possible.¹⁵²

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JANUARY 26, 2015 – ZOLTÁN BALOG: POLISH-HUNGARIAN ACTION TO BE LAUNCHED IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINIAN YOUTH

Hungary and Poland both stand in solidarity with those suffering in Ukraine. Therefore, the two countries are organizing joint camps for the Ukrainian Polish, and Hungarian youth, Hungary's Minister of Human Resources said in Warsaw on Monday.

On Monday, during his official visit to Poland, Mr. Balog held discussions with Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, and Minister of Science and Higher Education Lena Kolarska-Bobinska.

Mr. Balog provided an overview of political, structural, and economic development in Hungary since 2010. After the presentation, Marcin Zaborowski, the Director of PISM, addressed the Hungarian position regarding the conflict in Ukraine. Mr. Zaborowski explained that Hungary has been prioritizing the minority issue throughout the conflict in Ukraine, and therefore seeks to establish a coalition within the EU that is against Russian sanctions.

In response, Mr. Balog suggested that there is no anti-sanction coalition and Hungary has voted in favor of all EU sanctions. At the same time, there is a need for a concrete EU policy regarding Ukraine, he added. The question is who will rebuild Ukraine economically and this requires a clear roadmap, Mr. Balog pointed out.

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The Hungarian minister emphasized that “stability has never been jeopardized for the protection of minorities,” adding that the requirement regarding the use of mother tongue does not imply a shared nationality policy with Russia but rather refers to a fundamental human right.¹⁵³

FEBRUARY 11, 2015 – THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH AID DELIVERS AID SHIPMENT TO TRANSCARPATHIA

On Wednesday, the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid delivered aid shipments to several towns in Transcarpathia, including Beregszász (Berehove), Munkács (Mukachevo) and Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv).

The donations were received by members of a disability association, soldiers wounded in Eastern Ukraine who are being treated at a military hospital, and residents of a home for people with disabilities.

The first stop of the donation tour, starting in Beregszász (Berehove), was the head office of the local disability association, which received non-perishable foods, hygiene products and bread baked in the bakery of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia. Donations were distributed between the forty members of the disability association with the participation of Bishop Fábrián Sándor Zán and church district superintendent Béla Nagy. The church leaders later discussed possibilities of further assistance with Zoltán Babják, mayor of Beregszász (Berehove).

153 MTI news archive, January 26, 2015.

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The other part of the donation, weighing approximately 2-3 tons and worth several million forints, was received by patients of the military hospital in Munkács (Mukachevo). According to Lieutenant Colonel Yarema Becker, who is the commander of the hospital, the institution has treated approximately 700 soldiers since the outbreak of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Currently, they have 201 patients, of which 107 suffered combat injuries. The renovated hospital, which is surprisingly well equipped compared to hospitals in other Transcarpathian towns, treats the more lightly wounded, among whom there are currently no patients of Hungarian ethnicity.

Before offering a tour of the building, Dr. Becker explained that the wounded are transported by plane from the battlefield to Ungvár (Uzhhorod), from where they are brought by ambulance to Munkács (Mukachevo), located forty kilometers from the airport. In certain cases, wounded soldiers were transported by rail to the local station, he added.

The Reformed Church in Transcarpathia comprises 108 congregations, bringing together approximately 70,000 Hungarian Reformed worshippers in the region. Its diacanal department operates various social services, including a soup kitchen, homes for the elderly, daycare centers, children's homes, kindergartens, schools, as well as a crisis center. The crisis center is currently home to four families who fled from the Donetsk region.¹⁵⁴

154 MTI news archive, February 11, 2015.

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MARCH 23, 2015 – SOLTÉSZ: DELIVERY OF DONATIONS TO TRANSCARPATHIA TO BECOME EASIER

The delivery of donations to Transcarpathia and areas beyond the Carpathian Mountains will become easier and faster, Miklós Soltész, State Secretary for Churches, Minorities and Civil Affairs at the Ministry of Human Resources, announced following negotiations with leaders of the Ukrainian minority in Hungary. The State Secretary made this announcement during a press conference held in Nyíregyháza on Monday.

Mr. Soltész stated that the government aims to help both Hungarian and Ukrainian families in need who have been directly affected by the Ukrainian conflict on either side of the Carpathians.

Mr. Soltész indicated that in the future, larger quantities of food, medicine and clothing collected locally will be transported across the border in convoys, enabling faster delivery of donations to the local distributing organizations in the affected areas.

The State Secretary added that charitable organizations in Hungary have launched a collection of donations, and shipments are expected to be delivered to Ukraine in the coming weeks.

According to Mr. Soltész's announcement, Caritas Hungarica, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, the Hungarian Red Cross, the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid and the Hungarian Baptist Aid are collecting donations within their respective areas. These donations will be gathered and delivered to families living in Transcarpathia and

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beyond the Carpathians. Donations of food and quality clothing are particularly welcome.

During the press conference, Honorary Consul of Hungary Vasyl Vishivaniuk stated that families in need, wounded soldiers and their family members will receive further assistance from Hungary to help them overcome their difficulties. According to the consul's statement, donations will be delivered to those in need through the large distribution center established in Ivano-Frankivsk and the coordination center in Kyiv.

György Kravcsenko, the chairman of the Ukrainian Minority Self-Government in Hungary, stated that Ukrainians living in Hungary are doing their best to assist their compatriots in Ukraine and injured soldiers arriving for rehabilitation. He added that in the region of Ivano-Frankivsk alone, there are currently 15,000 refugees from Donetsk who have practically no belongings with them. For them, any external assistance can be crucial and even lifesaving, he stressed.¹⁵⁵

APRIL 22, 2015 – HUNGARIAN FIRST LADY ARRIVES IN UKRAINE FOR GOODWILL VISIT

As goodwill ambassador of the Charity Service of the Order of Malta, Anita Herczegh, the wife of the President of Hungary, took a two-day visit to Western Ukraine. She handed

155 MTI news archive, March 23, 2015.

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over a HUF 10 million donation of pharmaceuticals, visited a healthcare center, and met with local leaders in Lviv on Wednesday.

Ms. Herczegh was received in the office of Oleh Synyutka, the governor of Lviv Oblast, and Petro Kolodiy, chairman of the Oblast Council, who both expressed their gratitude to Hungary and the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta for their support to Ukraine, particularly to Lviv Oblast, in these challenging times.

In this regard, the hosts expressed that a true friend is recognized in times of trouble, and Hungary has proven to be a true friend of Ukraine.

After the meeting, the President's wife visited the Lviv Regional Center of Emergency Medical Care and Disaster Medicine, with which the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta has maintained a close relationship since 2012. The employees of the center have been trained for lifesaving first aid techniques by experts from the charity. Thanks to the instructors of the institution, over a thousand individuals, including doctors, students and soldiers heading to the conflict zone in Eastern Ukraine, have learned the techniques of resuscitation. The staff of the center demonstrated in practice the knowledge they have acquired from the doctors of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. Finally, the wife of the President handed over instruments for medical education to the institution.¹⁵⁶

156 MTI news archive, April 22, 2015.

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MAY 21, 2015 – UKRAINIAN CRISIS: HUNGARIAN STATE FOLK ENSEMBLE HELPS REFUGEES

Starting next week, the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble will be touring in Ukraine. As announced at a press conference held on Thursday at the Hungarian Embassy in Kyiv. The proceeds from the performances will be used to support domestic refugees affected by the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Ambassador of Hungary to Ukraine Ernő Keskeny informed press representatives that the ensemble will be performing a performance entitled “Megidézett Kárpátalja – Hágókon innen és túl” (Transcarpathia Evoked – Within and Beyond the Passes) during two tours, the first of which will take place from May 25 to June 2, in the regions of Transcarpathia and western Ukraine, while the second will be held from June 21 to 28 in Kyiv.

The ambassador pointed out that “Hungary closely follows developments in Ukraine with attention and empathy and supports the country’s progress on the European path.”

The funds raised from ticket sales and other Hungarian donations are planned to be used for the rehabilitation of six hundred children living in families that have fled from the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine. As part of this scheme, the children will have the opportunity to go for a holiday in Hungary in June and July.

Another important goal of the ensemble’s guest performances is to showcase the cultural heritage of ethnic groups living in western Ukraine alongside ethnic Hungarians. The program includes performances of Hungarian, Ukrainian, Hutsul, Ruthenian, Romani and Jewish dances.

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The premiere of the “Megidézett Kárpátalja – Hágókon innen és túl” performance took place on November 16, 2014, at the National Theatre in Budapest. The show received a positive reaction, including from the Ukrainian guests who attended the premiere. They expressed their desire for people in Ukraine to have the opportunity to see this production as well.¹⁵⁷

JUNE 1, 2015 – ZOLTÁN BALOG: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL AID SHIPMENTS HAVE A MESSAGE

As a result of the collaboration of eight charitable organizations, a humanitarian aid shipment worth approximately HUF 100 million will be sent from Hungary to Transcarpathia on Tuesday. Minister of Human Resources Zoltán Balog stressed in a Monday interview with the *M1* news channel during the packing of the shipment that it is important for every aid delivery to have a message.

It is Hungary’s duty to support the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, but the message of this shipment is that some of it is meant for areas of Ukraine beyond the Carpathian Mountains, the minister emphasized.

He further explained that the shipment of eight truckloads, prepared in cooperation with the Ukrainian Embassy and Ukrainian organizations, primarily includes non-perishable foods and medical aid.

¹⁵⁷ MTI news archive, May 21, 2015.

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The charity campaign has been joined by the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, Caritas Hungary, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, the Hungarian Red Cross, the Hungarian Baptist Aid, the EMIH Association of the Hungarian Jewish Congregation, the St. Luke Greek Catholic Charity Service and the Hospitaller Charity Service, Caritas Hungary leader Gábor Écsi said on the program.¹⁵⁸

AUGUST 27, 2015 – SOLTÉSZ: UKRAINIAN CHILDREN'S CAMP AT LAKE VELENCE NEARING ITS END

On Thursday, the State Secretary for Churches, Minorities and Civil Affairs at the Ministry of Human Resources announced that the camp organized for approximately 650 Ukrainian children in Velence has come to an end after ten weeks.

Jaroslava Hartyányi, the non-voting parliamentary representative of the country's Ukrainian minority, expressed her gratitude that Hungary, as Ukraine's western neighbor, has offered a helping hand to the Ukrainian people. She stated that Ukraine has received many gestures of support from Hungary, not only now but also on the occasion of its 24th anniversary of independence, while from their eastern neighbor, Russia, the country received "bombs and gunfire".

158 MTI news archive, June 1, 2015.

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The camp hosted children from Ukrainian families in need who are affected by the war in Ukraine. These children have fathers who have lost their lives, have been injured in the conflict or are currently serving on the frontline.¹⁵⁹

NOVEMBER 11, 2015 – JUDIT BERTALAN CZUNYI MET WITH THE LEADERS OF TRANSCARPATHIA OBLAST IN UNGVÁR (UZHHOROD)

Judit Bertalan Czunyi, State Secretary for Public Education at the Ministry of Human Resources, discussed the issues of Hungarian-language education in Transcarpathia and Hungarian-Ukrainian educational cooperation with the leaders of Transcarpathia Oblast in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) on Wednesday.

During the meeting, attended by Hanna Sopkova, deputy head of the county administration's education department, the Hungarian State Secretary for Public Education raised the issue that graduates of Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia are disadvantaged because they are not allowed to take advanced-level exams in Hungarian language at independent examination centers. She asked her hosts to intervene with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education to find a solution to the problem before the end of the current academic year.

159 MTI news archive, August 27, 2015.

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Judit Bertalan Czunyi expressed her gratitude to the educational authorities of Transcarpathia for their assistance in obtaining official approval for the textbooks developed with the support of the Ministry of Human Resources, which are used to teach Hungarian as a foreign language in Ukrainian schools in the region. She proposed cooperation with the Ukrainian side, suggesting the sharing of Hungarian methodological experiences in the joint development and approval of textbooks.

She expressed her gratitude for the launch of voluntary classes of Hungarian as a foreign language in numerous Ukrainian schools in Transcarpathia, which is supported by Hungary. Ms. Bertalan Czunyi emphasized that “the supportive presence of the Hungarian state in Transcarpathia strengthens not only the Hungarian community but the entire region as well.” Hennadiy Moskal, governor of Transcarpathia Oblast, expressed that there is a significant demand for learning the Hungarian language in Transcarpathia, which allows Ukrainian students intending to continue their studies in Hungarian higher education institutions to pursue their studies without the need for special language preparation, in possession of adequate language skills. He added that the leadership of the region supports the teaching of Hungarian language in Ukrainian schools. Mr. Moskal also mentioned that it is gratifying to see that the teaching of the Hungarian language has also started in schools in mountainous regions where there is no significant Hungarian population. Additionally, the governor emphasized that state authorities in the Transcarpathian region are open to cooperation with Hungary in the field of education. Ms.

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Bertalan Czunyi had a separate meeting with Volodymyr Chubirko, the head of Transcarpathia Oblast Council, who expressed his gratitude to Hungary for the diverse assistance provided to Transcarpathia and Ukraine during the war situation, particularly for the medical treatment of twenty injured Ukrainian soldiers in Hungary and a summer vacation program for 800 children living in the war-affected zone. In response to the proposal raised by the State Secretary, the Transcarpathian politician promised to intervene with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education to resolve the issue of exam equivalency concerning students from both countries. Ms. Czunyi paid a visit to the Ukrainian-language School No. 2 in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), which was the first in Transcarpathia to start teaching Hungarian as a curricular subject. The State Secretary ceremoniously handed over textbooks to more than forty fifth-grade pupils who are studying the Hungarian language. During the visit, the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) signed an agreement with the educational institution regarding the renovation of the Hungarian language studio with support from Hungary.¹⁶⁰

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MTI news archive, November 11, 2015.

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FEBRUARY 22, 2016. STUDENT HALL RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN SUPPORT OPENED IN UNGVÁR (UZHGOROD)

On Monday, a dormitory for students studying at the Hungarian faculty of Uzhhorod National University was ceremoniously inaugurated in the city. The facility was refurbished with a contribution of HUF 21 million from the Pallas Athene Domus Concordiae Foundation of the Hungarian National Bank.

During his speech at the inauguration ceremony, the university's rector Volodymyr Smolanka expressed his gratitude to Hungary its multifaceted support provided for the improvement of the university. He emphasized that the visit of Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó to the university last year gave a major boost to the cooperation between the higher education institution and Hungary. Mr. Smolanka also expressed his belief that the comfortable accommodation units contribute to the academic success of students studying at the Hungarian faculty of Uzhhorod National University.

In his speech, Hennadiy Moskal, the Governor of Transcarpathia, also expressed his gratitude to Hungary for the support it has provided to the troubled region of Transcarpathia and Ukraine thus far. At the same time, he expressed hope that the successful cooperation between Transcarpathia and Hungary will continue in the future.

In response to an MTI inquiry, Sándor Spenik, Dean of the Hungarian Faculty at UNE, stated that it is a great pleasure

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that students at the university's Hungarian Faculty will now reside in dormitory rooms that meet European standards and are exceptionally comfortable even compared to conditions in Hungary. He added that the Pallas Athene Foundation's HUF 20.9 million donation covered the refurbishment of twelve blocks, which will accommodate 84 students and two visiting professors from Hungary. Even though there are 240 students studying in the Hungarian-language faculty, the majority of them live in or near Uzhhorod, meaning that dormitory places can be provided to those living farther from the city.¹⁶¹

FEBRUARY 24, 2016 – SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY'S INTEREST IS A POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY STRONG UKRAINE

If there exists a country interested in Ukraine being politically and economically strong and achieving peace on its entire territory, it is definitely Hungary, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó said after consultations with his Ukrainian counterpart on Wednesday in Budapest.

The minister emphasized that it is of fundamental interest for both parties to do everything possible to ensure the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This is a prerequisite for moving past the current sanction policy, which is a shared interest, the minister said, pointing out that this policy is harmful not only to those whom it is directed against but also inflicts losses on others.

161 MTI news archive. February 22, 2016.

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Mr. Sziijártó said that it is an important endeavor of Hungarian economic, foreign, and national policy to continuously strengthen cooperation and relations with Ukraine. It is in Hungary's interest to have strong neighbors, he said, adding that the security of Ukraine's ethnic Hungarian community of 150,000 people is also of significant importance. The minister highlighted that the ongoing war in Ukraine and its consequences impose security risks and cause significant economic damage. Moreover, the bilateral trade volume between Hungary and Ukraine has decreased by half over the past two years.

Mr. Sziijártó stated that Hungary is a country that not only speaks about supporting Ukraine but also takes action in doing so. Hungary supports Ukraine's European integration efforts, including the granting of visa liberalization if the country fulfills the previously set requirements. Moreover, Hungary also strives to assist Ukraine in enhancing its energy security, he said, adding that Hungary supports reforms within the framework of the Visegrád Group (V4) and has provided support to Transcarpathia with aid totaling HUF 2.3 billion and other Ukrainian regions with donations valued at HUF 230 million. The minister added that Hungary also provides assistance in the care of wounded Ukrainian soldiers.

The minister also emphasized the need for a breakthrough in Hungarian-Ukrainian economic cooperation. To this end, Eximbank is providing a credit line of \$27 million to facilitate business connections between Hungarian and Ukrainian companies, and new trading houses have opened in Beregszász (Berehove) and Uzhhorod (Ungvár). Hungary

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also aims improve transit on the state border by opening new border crossing points and expanding the capacity of the existing ones.

Speaking to the press, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin expressed his appreciation to Hungary for its consistent support to fully implement the Minsk agreements, which he believes is the only path to ensuring peace. He highlighted that the situation in Ukraine affects the security of Europe as a whole.

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister thanked Hungary for the support it provides for Ukraine's European integration and visa liberalization. Additionally, he urged cooperation between Hungarian and Ukrainian companies.¹⁶²

FEBRUARY 24, 2016 – UKRAINE JOINS STIPENDIUM HUNGARICUM PROGRAM

Starting from September, one hundred Ukrainian students will have the opportunity to study at Hungarian higher education institutions through the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship program, Minister of Human Resources Zoltán Balog announced after signing an agreement with Pavlo Klimkin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the neighboring country.

The minister recalled that Ukraine is the second European country after Serbia to join the program, launched under

162 MTI news archive, February 24, 2016.

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Hungary's Eastward Opening initiative a few years ago, that sees thousands of students flocking to Hungary. He noted that the move is both an act of humanitarian assistance and a method to provide backing for strengthening economic and cultural ties between the two countries in the future.

Mr. Balog indicated that he will travel to Kyiv accompanied by university rectors to present the program there.

The minister told reporters that he informed his negotiating partner about the activities aimed to assist Ukraine, emphasizing that Hungary plays an almost exclusive role in offering essential public services, such as education and healthcare, that are necessary for the preservation of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

Mr. Balog stressed that Hungary is also open towards others. As an example, he mentioned that last year, 700 Ukrainian children came to Hungary for a holiday, pointing out that both this program and humanitarian activities will be continued. Mr. Balog also referred to the fact that through the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and The Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, donations worth HUF 100 million were delivered to both Transcarpathia and inner Ukraine.

Mr. Balog noted that Hungary supports Ukraine not only based on ethnic grounds or through Hungarian-Ukrainian cooperation, but also assists Ukrainians in need.¹⁶³

163 MTI news archive, February 24, 2016.

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MARCH 11, 2016 – GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER ISTVÁN GREZSA ANNOUNCED HUNGARIAN SUPPORT FOR BEREKSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE), TRANSCARPATHIA

István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, announced the Hungarian government's support for alleviating social issues and promoting cultural development in Berekszász (Berehove) on Friday.

During a joint press conference with Berekszász (Berehove) mayor Zoltán Babják at the town's Hungarian consulate, Mr. Grezsa emphasized that the government has been paying special attention to the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia for years, while not forgetting about the Rusyn-Ukrainian majority living in the region, which it seeks to help commensurate to its means amid the current hardship. This is indicated by the present support of HUF 12,5 million, which the Hungarian government is providing to alleviate social problems in Berekszász (Berehove) and develop the town's cultural scene.

Mr. Grezsa also mentioned that the Hungarian government will cover the costs of casting a statue in memory of Taras Shevchenko, the national poet of Ukraine, which is to be erected in Berekszász (Berehove). He expressed hope that the Shevchenko statue, to be placed near the Petőfi Memorial, will become a national memorial site for Ukrainians living in the town.

The government commissioner also announced that the Hungarian cabinet will provide funds for the complete replacement of seating in the audience area as part of the

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renovation of the town's cultural center. The government is also supporting the organization of a large-scale concert at the venue on Saturday to commemorate the Hungarian national holiday.

Mr. Babják expressed his gratitude to the government for its manifold forms of support. The city has just gone through a very difficult winter period, but the challenges are far from over, he said, pointing out that this is why assistance provided by the Hungarian government is extremely important. Its contribution to operating a soup kitchen, which helps many in need, is also crucial in this regard.¹⁶⁴

MARCH 21, 2016 – GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER ISTVÁN GREZSA ANNOUNCES HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM FOR UKRAINIANS IN TRANSCARPATHIA

István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for coordinating development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, announced on Monday in Beregszász (Berehove) the launch of a Hungarian language program for Ukrainians in more than 60 settlements across Transcarpathia. The program is supported by the Hungarian government.

Mr. Grezsa stated at the press conference, held at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, that while the main focus of the Hungarian gov-

164 MTI news archive, March 11, 2016.

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ernment is to support the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, it also aims to help the majority population to the best of its abilities. Due to this and the increased interest in the Hungarian language among the Rusyn-Ukrainian population in the recent years, the Hungarian government is supporting the launch of a free Hungarian language learning program from May, for those living in 62 settlements across the Ukrainian region.

The government commissioner announced that under the program, which has received nearly HUF 15 million in funding, applicants will receive Hungarian language education in small groups for a total of 120 hours, four times a week, organized by the Adult Education Center of the Rákóczi College. He indicated that the Hungarian government also supports the postgraduate training of teachers participating in the program at the College, with the involvement of lecturers from the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Additionally, the government supports 500 students from Transcarpathia who study Hungarian as a foreign language to participate in a summer language camp in Hungary as part of their school education. He described it as a positive development that 1,000 children in Ukrainian schools across Transcarpathia and five hundred children in Sunday schools are already learning Hungarian. There is a growing demand for learning the language beyond the Carpathians, even in Galicia, he said.

The College's rector Ildikó Orosz explained that the locations of the Hungarian language courses were chosen to be far from the cities where Hungarian language schools already have a high number of students. Settlements engag-

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ing in rural tourism and where there is hope for the return of Hungarian visitors who have been absent for the past two years due to events in Ukraine were prioritized. Certain regions where there are significant populations of descendants of assimilated Hungarians were also considered.¹⁶⁵

APRIL 18, 2016 – LANGUAGE STUDIO RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN SUPPORT INAUGURATED IN UNGVÁR (UZHGOROD)

On Monday, István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, handed over a language laboratory renovated with support from Hungary. The classroom is located in the Ungvár (Uzhgorod) school that is the first in Ukraine to teach Hungarian as a foreign language.

In connection with the language studio, refurbished with HUF 3.5 million in Hungarian support, Mr. Grezsa expressed his hope that every school in Ukraine can have such modern classrooms.

The school administration expressed their gratitude to the Hungarian government for the assistance stating that in addition to the current 48 students learning Hungarian, 108 others have indicated that they will choose Hungarian as a foreign language in the next academic year. In response,

165 MTI news archive, March 21, 2016.

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Mr. Grezsa claimed that the Hungarian government is open to providing further support for the teaching of the Hungarian language in Transcarpathia. Ungvár (Uzhhorod) mayor Andriy Bohdan announced at the event that his office has received requests from several schools in the city regarding the introduction of Hungarian as a foreign language.

In his statement to the press, Mr. Grezsa stressed that the inauguration of the renovated Hungarian language classroom is significant because it carries a symbolic message of good neighborliness and friendship.¹⁶⁶

MAY 6, 2016 – UKRAINIAN FOREIGN MINISTER THANKS HUNGARY FOR SUPPORTING UKRAINE

Speaking during a visit to the Hungarian consulate at Beregszász (Berehove) on Friday, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin expressed his gratitude for the consistent political support provided by Hungary in ensuring Ukraine's independence and sovereignty. H

At the consulate, Mr. Klimkin held negotiations with Zsolt Csutora, Hungarian Deputy State Secretary responsible for Eastward Opening at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "I am very grateful to our Hungarian friends for their consistent political support in ensuring the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine. Special recognition goes to the

166 MTI news archive, April 18, 2016.

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Prime Minister of Hungary and Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó for their support, including the prolongation of sanctions against Russia until the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This is the sign of a true friend,” the Ukrainian leader said.

In response to a question from MTI about when the construction of the vital bypass road diverting truck traffic will begin around Beregszász (Berehove), Mr. Klimkin explained that the Ukrainian side is doing everything possible to start the construction work as soon as possible, adding that the government is ready to provide state guarantees for the necessary loan for road construction. However, an agreement with the International Monetary Fund is also required in this matter, which is causing delays in finding a solution, he added.¹⁶⁷

MAY 26, 2016 – KÁROLY CZIBERE: HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TRANSCARPATIA

On Thursday, Hungarian State Secretary responsible for social affairs and social inclusion at the Ministry of Human Resources Károly Cibere stated in Beregszász (Berehove) that the Hungarian government wants the Hungarian community and the entire population of Transcarpathia to know

167 MTI news archive, May 6, 2016.

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that despite the migration crisis, they have not been forgotten. He emphasized that the government is continuing and even expanding its diverse forms of support to people living in the region.

During his one-day visit to the town, M. Czibere visited social institutions and met with Hungarian church and administrative leaders. The politician, accompanied by Mayor Zoltán Babják, visited the social center's soup kitchen, which is operated by the municipal office. 750 kilograms of non-perishable food, which was purchased with financial support from the Ministry of Human Resources and delivered by the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, was handed over to the soup kitchen. Packages consisting of non-perishable food items were also donated to Nursery No. 5 in Beregszász (Berehove).

After his visit to the social center, Mr. Czibere stated in response to an inquiry from MTI that the purpose of his second visit to Beregszász (Berehove) within a year is to ensure locals that the Hungarian government, despite the migration crisis, has not forgotten about the Hungarian community and the entire population of Transcarpathia. He emphasized that the government continues to provide comprehensive support to the people living in the region and is even expanding forms of assistance, adding that the issue of supporting Transcarpathia is constantly on the agenda of the Hungarian government. During its visit to Beregszász (Berehove), the Hungarian delegation is discussing this with the local religious and administrative leaders, Mr. Czibere said, pointing out that his entourage arrived in the Transcarpathian town with a donation of non-perishable food

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items weighing over two tons and exceeding HUF 1 million in value.

Mr. Czibere emphasized that during his upcoming discussion with mayor Zoltán Babják, they will primarily review the social situation of the population in the town and explore how the Hungarian government could support those in need more effectively. It should be noted that Mr. Babják is successfully implementing a complex social program that he has developed, he added.¹⁶⁸

MAY 31, 2016 – HUNGARY TO SUPPLY MISSING VACCINE FOR NEWBORNS AND SMALL CHILDREN IN TRANSCARPATHIA

A critical public health situation has arisen in Transcarpathia due to the lack of immunobiological preparations necessary for the vaccination of newborns and young children. As a result, the leadership of the Ukrainian region is requesting humanitarian aid from Hungary to supplement the missing vaccines, the press service of the Transcarpathian regional state administration announced on Tuesday.

According to the report, healthcare institutions in Transcarpathia have been unable to perform children's immunizations to the necessary extent over the past two years due to "chronically inadequate" supply deliveries. As a result, there is currently a need for approximately 15,460 children to receive the BCG vaccine for tuberculosis in the region;

168 MTI news archive, May 26, 2016.

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over 25,000 children are waiting to receive the Pentaxim vaccine against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, and Haemophilus influenzae type B, around 44,000 children are yet to receive the Infarix vaccine against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus, about 43,630 children still need to receive the Priorix vaccine against measles, mumps, and rubella, and 20,350 children have not yet been vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

The press quoted Governor Hennadiy Moskal as stating that Transcarpathia currently lacks both antivenom serum for snake bites and rabies serum. Ukrainian Ministry of Health does not provide such supplies to the region at all; therefore, patients in need must be urgently transported abroad for treatment, he pointed out while announcing that the leadership of the region has turned to the Hungarian government for assistance, requesting humanitarian aid to support the acquisition of immunobiological preparations necessary for the vaccination of newborns and young children in Transcarpathia.

According to the statement, Tamás Szentes, the Director of the National Public Health Center who visited Transcarpathia recently to assess the current public health situation, confirmed that the Hungarian government is prepared to fulfill the Transcarpathian request for the replacement of vaccines after the necessary products are procured from foreign manufacturers. The condition for providing assistance is the unhindered crossing of the humanitarian cargo through the state border, for which the authorities in Transcarpathia will ensure the necessary conditions, the press office of the Ukrainian region stated.¹⁶⁹

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On Saturday, the first group of 600 children living in the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine departed from Ungvár (Uzhhorod) to Hungary. The children will spend a week by Lake Velence as part of a 12-week recreational program supported by the Hungarian government.

Prior to the departure of more than 60 children from the Anti-Terrorist Operation zone in eastern Ukraine to Hungary, József Buhajla, the Hungarian Consul General in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), stated in an interview with MTI that thanks to the collaboration between the Ministry of Human Resources, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Hungarian representation in Ukraine and the Ukrainian Minority Self-Government of Hungary, approximately 600 underprivileged Ukrainian children will have the opportunity to spend their holidays at Lake Velence this year. During the selection process of the children, in which the Honorary Consulate of Hungary in Ivano-Frankivsk played a major role, the primary criterion was that they come from the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine, Mr. Buhajla added.

The diplomat also suggested that similarly to last year, when nearly 700 schoolchildren affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine attended camps in Hungary, children will also spend one week each in Gárdony or Agárd in all twelve shifts Hungarian consulates operating in Transcarpathia will ensure the smooth crossing of the children at the border, the country's Consul General in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) stated.¹⁷⁰

169 MTI news archive, May 31, 2016.

170 MTI news archive, June 11, 2016.

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JUNE 14, 2016 – SOLTÉSZ: HUF 40 MILLION GRANT FOR SUMMER CAMPS FOR UKRAINIAN CHILDREN

The Hungarian government is supporting summer camps of nearly seven hundred Ukrainian children by Lake Velence this year with a HUF 40 million contribution, the State Secretary for Churches, Minorities and Civil Affairs announced during a visit to Agárd, where he met the first group of Ukrainian children for this year's camp.

Speaking at the Velence Water Sports School, Miklós Soltész said that similar camps last year were extremely successful, as the children gained both mental and physical strength during their one-week stay.

Mr. Soltész indicated that there will be eleven more weeks of camping until the end of August. Among the participants, many have lost their fathers have had them injured in the Ukrainian-Russian armed conflict.

While activities for the young participants coming from Donetsk, Kyiv, Luhansk, Transcarpathia, and other parts of Ukraine will largely be located around Lake Velence, they will also include sightseeing in Budapest and a visit to the zoo, he said.

Lyubov Nepop, Ukraine's Ambassador to Hungary, believes that the Hungarian government's gesture symbolizes Ukrainian-Hungarian friendship. Hungary, as a neighboring friendly country, has felt the pain that Ukraine is going through, and therefore, it is offering its assistance. The ambassador added that only nations assisting each other will continue to be successful in the future.

Ms. Nepop requested the Hungarian government to support further restrictive sanctions against Russia in order to

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achieve peace in Ukraine, adding that peace is unimaginable without the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Jaroslava Hartyányi, chairman of the Ukrainian Minority Self-Government of Hungary, expressed her gratitude towards the country for offering a helping hand to the Ukrainian people. She noted that last year nearly six hundred Ukrainian children had the opportunity to spend their summer vacation at Lake Velence, and this year even more children will have the chance to experience a peaceful world. Ms. Hartyányi also thanked the Ukrainian community in Hungary for their continuous support in organizing these camps.¹⁷¹

JUNE 28, 2016 – HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS VICTIMS OF HAIL DAMAGE IN TRANSCARPATHIA

The Government Commissioner for Transcarpathia is to provide HUF 4 million in rapid aid to help the victims of last week's hailstorm in Transcarpathia, the Prime Minister's Office informed MTI on Tuesday.

The statement recalls that Transcarpathia was hit by a hailstorm last week. According to current information, in the most affected Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) and Huszt (Khust) districts, the roof structures of thousands of residential and public buildings, including church properties,

171 MTI news archive, June 14, 2016.

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have been damaged. Additionally, several hundred hectares of orchards and cereal fields have suffered severe hail damage.¹⁷²

AUGUST 12, 2016 – UNIVERSITY SPORTS FIELD BUILT WITH HUNGARIAN SUPPORT OPENED IN UNGVÁR (UZHGOROD)

A modern sports field, funded with HUF 20 million in support from the Hungarian government, was officially handed over students at Uzhhorod National University on Friday.

During the inauguration ceremony of the outdoor sports complex, which includes football, volleyball, and basketball courts, as well as gymnastics equipment, the university's rector Volodymyr Smolanka expressed his gratitude to Hungary for the diverse support provided for the development of the university. He recalled that this is the second project in the higher education institution that is being implemented with support from Hungary within the past half-year and spoke of his belief that the sports field built next to the student hall will contribute to students being able to spend their free time in a healthy way, regardless of ethnicity.

In his speech, István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, mentioned that the sports field is symbolically be-

172 MTI news archive, June 28, 2016.

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ing inaugurated just days before the national holidays of Hungary and Ukraine. He emphasized the importance of the newly built sports facility, funded by a HUF 20 million grant, in providing healthy recreational opportunities for all students of the university. With this gesture, Hungary also demonstrates that it supports, to the best of its ability, not only the Hungarian community but also Ukrainians, Rusyns, Jews, Roma and other ethnic groups living in the region. He indicated that after the refurbished dormitory level was handed over to Hungarian students half a year ago, ethnic Ukrainian students will have the opportunity to occupy a dormitory section that has also been modernized with the support of the Hungarian government within a couple of days. The government commissioner explained that Hungarian-Ukrainian relations are strengthened by the fact that the economically expanding Hungary is doing the best it can to assist its troubled neighbor.

In his speech, Hennadiy Moskal, Governor of Transcarpathia Oblast, also expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government for the extensive support provided to Transcarpathia. At the same time, he apologized to the Hungarian community for the recent vandalism of the Sándor Petőfi's statue in Ungvár (Uzhhorod). "Unfortunately, there are lunatics who regularly desecrate the Hungarian monument on the eve of the two nations' national holidays. This time, they broke off the sword of the statue," he said. Mr. Moskal stated that he has written a letter to the leadership of the Ukrainian National Police, expressing his dissatisfaction with the lack of progress in the investigation of the statue's vandalism.¹⁷³

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AUGUST 13, 2016 – YET ANOTHER GROUP OF EASTERN UKRAINIAN CHILDREN DEPARTS AFTER HOLIDAY IN HUNGARY

The final group of children affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine has departed to Hungary from the village of Kincseshomok (Kholmok), near Ungvár (Uzhhorod), for a holiday by Lake Velence funded by the Hungarian government.

Prior to the ceremonious sendoff of the eighty children, István Grezsa, Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, told the press that over six hundred Ukrainian children in twelve groups who have lost a parent or have had a parent injured in the war were able to enjoy holidays in Hungary at the expense of the country's government in the running year.

He added that in mid-August, Ukrainian children from Transcarpathia who are studying Hungarian as a foreign language in school will embark on a summer camp in Hungary. Therefore, it can be stated that this year, several thousand Hungarian and non-Hungarian children from Ukraine have enjoyed or will enjoy holidays in Hungary by Lake Velence and Lake Balaton, Mr. Grezsa stressed.¹⁷⁴

173 MTI news archive, August 12, 2016.

174 MTI news archive, August 13, 2016.

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AUGUST 19, 2016 – STUDENT HALL RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT INAUGURATED IN UNGVÁR (UZHGOROD)

On Friday, István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for coordinating development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, officially handed over the renovated section of the student dormitory at Uzhhorod National University. The renovation was made possible through a HUF 40 million grant by the Hungarian government.

During the ceremony, Mr. Grezsa stated to the press that the current inauguration of the renovated dormitory floor marks the third investment at the university this year, which was supported by the Hungarian government.

The government commissioner explained that by providing support for the development of the university, the Hungarian government also signals its strong commitment to Ukraine's European integration efforts. As he indicated, the total cost of the three development projects is approximately HUF 100 million, with the majority being covered by the Hungarian government, although Uzhhorod National University also contributed to the costs. He further explained that with the support provided for the modernization, the government contributes to enabling students to study more effectively and leave the university with fond memories after obtaining their degrees.

According to Mr. Grezsa's statement, he suggested that in Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia, Ukrainian language education for Hungarian-speaking students should

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be taught as a foreign, rather than a native language. As a result, the language could be learnt more effectively.¹⁷⁵

SEPTEMBER 1, 2016. GYM BUILT WITH HUNGARIAN SUPPORT HANDED OVER IN A ROMA SCHOOL IN BEREKSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE)

On Thursday, a gymnasium funded by Szerencsejáték Zrt., Hungary's largest gambling service provider, was inaugurated in a Hungarian-language primary school attended by Roma pupils in Berekszász (Berehove). The project was carried out in collaboration with the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and the Consulate of Hungary in the town.

During the opening ceremony of the school year, which was combined with the inauguration, Ágnes Kudron, principal of School No. 7, expressed gratitude to the Hungarian donors for their diverse assistance provided to the educational institution. As she highlighted, the nearly 350 disadvantaged children from Berekszász (Berehove) who attend the educational institution were in great need of the sports hall, as until now physical education classes were mostly held outdoors.¹⁷⁶

175 MTI news archive, August 19, 2016.

176 MTI news archive, September 1, 2016.

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NOVEMBER 9, 2016 – FIFTY-SIX TONS OF AID HAS BEEN SHIPPED TO UKRAINE

A humanitarian aid shipment of fifty-six tons valuing HUF 32 million departed from Budapest to Ukraine on five trucks on Tuesday. The aid was organized under the coordination of the Charity Council, which brings together Hungarian charitable organizations.

Prior to the departure of the convoy, Hungarian State Secretary for Churches, Minorities and Civil Affairs Miklós Soltész emphasized that humanitarian aid shipments have been sent to Transcarpathia and beyond the Carpathian Mountains several times this year.

The politician stated that hospital beds, medical equipment and vaccines are being delivered to areas beyond the Carpathians, while non-perishable food, school supplies, clothing and kitchen equipment is being sent to Transcarpathia.

The shipment was assembled by Caritas Hungarica, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, The Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, and the Hungarian Baptist Aid, as members of the Charity Council. Soltész mentioned that the Hospitaller Charity Service, the St. Luke Greek Catholic Charity Service and the aid organization of the Unified Hungarian Jewish Congregation also contributed to the aid.

Zoltán Ónodi-Szűcs, the State Secretary responsible for health at the Ministry of Human Resources, pointed out that the so-called vaccination coverage of the Ukrainian population has significantly decreased over the past five years. As a result, diseases that had previously disappeared, such as polio, pertussis and tuberculosis, have reemerged.

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The goal is to provide assistance in overcoming these diseases, and vaccination rates are hoped to reach at least 90 percent in the near future, which is necessary for the population to regain immunity, the State Secretary said.

Lyubov Nepop, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Hungary, expressed her gratitude to the government, humanitarian organizations, and the Hungarian people for the humanitarian aid shipment.

She reminded that Ukraine is still fighting against Russian aggression and recalled that Hungary has already provided assistance in the treatment of Ukrainian soldiers; in a sign of friendship, the country has also offered holiday opportunities to Ukrainian children.

Ukraine will also not forget that Hungary was among the first countries to recognize its independence, the ambassador stressed.¹⁷⁷

NOVEMBER 16, 2016 – DORMITORY BUILDING BUILT WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT INAGURATED BY ÁRPÁD JÁNOS POTÁPI IN TRANSCARPATHIA

Árpád János Potápi, the Hungarian State Secretary for National Policy, handed over a dormitory building in the village of Nagydobrony (Velyka Dobron) in the Ungvár (Uzhhorod) district on Wednesday. The building, which serves Hungar-

177 MTI news archive, November 9, 2016.

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ian vocational education in Transcarpathia, was constructed with support from the Hungarian government through a grant of almost HUF 40 million.

The newly established 50-bed dormitory building is part of a program aimed at the development of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education. During the inauguration, Mr. Potápi highlighted the success of the Hungarian Standing Conference's thematic year initiative launched in 2015, which focused on Hungarian vocational education abroad. The program has continued in 2016 and has proven to be very successful in Transcarpathia.

He added that in the last two years, the Hungarian government supported Hungarian vocational education in Transcarpathia with HUF 50 million annually. MTI news archive, November 16, 2016. The vast majority of these funds were used for specific developments, such as the construction of the dormitory in Nagydobrony (Velyka Dobron) at a cost of HUF 38 million, Mr. Potápi said. As the State Secretary explained, this support also provided for the development of an agricultural school at Makkosjánosi (Yanoshi), a specialist vocational school at Berehove (Bereg-szász) and an inter-school educational farm at Tiszabökény (Tysobyken).

In her speech, Ildikó Orosz, rector of the Ferenc Rakoczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, expressed her gratitude to the Hungarian government and state for standing by the Transcarpathian community, including both ethnic Hungarians and Ukrainians. She also mentioned that there are several support programs imple-

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mented in Transcarpathia with the assistance of Hungary that benefit multiple nationalities.¹⁷⁸

DECEMBER 7, 2016 – SZIJJÁRTÓ: INSTEAD OF PRETTY WORDS, UKRAINE NEEDS REAL ACTION AND HELP

Ukraine needs real actions and assistance instead of empty promises, Péter Szijjártó, Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs, told journalists during a break at the two-day meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels on Wednesday.

Mr. Szijjártó emphasized that Hungary is among the most committed supporters within NATO when it comes to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Hungary is not indifferent to the fate of Ukraine, not only because of their neighboring relationship but also because there is a Hungarian national community of around 150,000 people living in Transcarpathia, the minister said.

He stated that the European Union is blocking two important security and economic issues, which pose significant risks to Ukraine. Due to the resistance of the European Union and certain member states, Ukraine has not yet received visa-free status, even though Kyiv meets all requirements. Additionally, the free trade agreement has not yet come into effect.

178 MTI news archive, November 16, 2016.

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Therefore, Hungary has taken steps within its national authority, such as abolishing fees for long-term residence visa applications and procedures.

In terms of economic cooperation, Hungary is providing a \$50 million (approximately HUF 14.6 billion) credit for the implementation of infrastructure developments in Ukraine. In addition, Hungary approved HUF 5.2 billion in funding for the implementation of the economic plan in Transcarpathia, aimed at strengthening the economic development of the Hungarian national community, he added.

Mr. Szijjártó stated that Hungary ensures gas supply to Ukraine according to market demand. Besides, Hungary continues to provide medical treatment for 25 injured Ukrainian soldiers and maintains its contribution of €100,000 to the mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Ukraine.¹⁷⁹

DECEMBER 9, 2016 – HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT DONATES VALUABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO TRANSCARPATHIAN HOSPITALS

On Friday, István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, ceremoniously handed over modern ultrasound devices and other diagnostic equipment to four district hospitals in Transcarpathia on behalf of the Hungarian government in Beregszász (Berehove).

179 MTI news archive, December 7, 2016.

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Mr. Grezsa stated during the ceremony at the Hungarian Consulate in the town that in the past year, he visited numerous healthcare and social institutions in Transcarpathia and observed that the challenging economic situation in Ukraine has had a significant impact on the healthcare sector. To alleviate this situation, the Hungarian government has launched a support project to assist healthcare in Transcarpathia. Through this project, not only the healthcare of the local Hungarian community but also the healthcare of those belonging to other nationalities is being supported. As a result, the hospitals in Ilosva (Irshava), Szolyva (Svalyava) and Rahó (Rakhiv) will receive modern ultrasound machines worth a total of HUF 26 million during the Advent period, while the hospital in Volóc (Volovets) will receive medical equipment. He noted that these mountainous regions are predominantly inhabited by ethnic Ukrainians, and the modern medical equipment are intended to serve their healthcare needs.

The government commissioner expressed his hope that the support provided through medical equipment will strengthen the friendship between the Ukrainian and Hungarian people. He also rejected recent articles published in certain Ukrainian media outlets, which suggested had ulterior motives behind its assistance to Transcarpathia. István Grezsa pointed out that “Hungary has always been and will remain a reliable partner for Ukraine and Transcarpathia”. Finally, he expressed his gratitude to Hungarian consulates in Transcarpathia, as well as the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association for their efforts in coordinating Hungarian-Ukrainian cooperation.¹⁸⁰

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DECEMBER 15, 2016 – NURSERY SCHOOL BUILT WITH SUPPORT FROM HUNGARIAN MUNICIPALITIES INAUGURATED BY LÁSZLÓ KÖVÉR IN SHALANKI, TRANSCARPATHIA

According to Hungarian folk wisdom, “the future is always reflected in the eyes of children. Therefore, the nursery school here in Shalanky, is not just an educational institution, but also the house of the future,” said László Kövér during his inaugural speech at the ceremonial opening of the new wing and gymnasium of the nursery school in Shalanki (Salánk), a Hungarian-speaking village near Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv).

“The facts and actions, not just intentions and statements, allow us to say that Hungary is one of the most reliable and helpful neighbors to the young Ukraine, and we intend to remain so in the future if we receive similar respect, understanding, and assistance from Ukraine as Ukraine receives from Hungary,” emphasized the Speaker of the National Assembly. He indicated that Hungary primarily expects the Ukrainian state to respect and support the thousand-year-old Hungarian national unity that connects the Hungarian community of Transcarpathia with Hungary. “Transcarpathian Hungarians have proven that they can and want to be both productive and loyal citizens of Ukraine, while remaining faithful members of the Hungarian nation,” Mr. Kövér in his speech to mark the opening of the institution.¹⁸¹

180 MTI news archive, December 9, 2016.

181 MTI news archive, December 15, 2016.

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FEBRUARY 13, 2017 – HUNGARY HELPS TRANSCARPATHIA WITH 20,000 DOSES OF MEASLES VACCINE

Hungary has offered twenty thousand doses of measles vaccine to Transcarpathia to prevent the spread of the epidemic from Romania to the Ukrainian region, István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, told MTI on Monday.

Mr. Grezsa stated via a telephone connection that last year, in order to demonstrate its good neighborly relations with Ukraine and specifically with Transcarpathia, Hungary committed to providing the necessary vaccines for age-specific immunizations to the Ukrainian region for a period of five years upon request, as there has been a shortage of these vaccines in recent years. He added that since a measles outbreak has recently occurred among children in Romania, Hungary has offered twenty thousand doses of vaccine to help prevent the spread of the disease in Transcarpathia. As he indicated, the delivery of the vaccines will be coordinated by the Chief Medical Officer in the coming days, who will consult with the relevant Ukrainian authorities in Transcarpathia.

The Hungarian side has assessed the vaccine needs of Transcarpathia for this year. Currently, a procurement procedure is underway to purchase four types of vaccines that are registered in Ukraine and are necessary for mandatory vaccinations. The total value of the procurement is in excess

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of HUF 480 million, said the Commissioner. Hungary will provide the vaccines to Transcarpathia as healthcare aid, and if needed, it will continue supporting Ukraine with vaccines for the next four years, Mr. Grezsa said.¹⁸²

FEBRUARY 27, 2017 – HUNGARIAN RAPID AID FOR TRANSCARPATHIAN PATIENTS WITH SEVERE KIDNEY DISEASE

The government of Hungary has provided urgent support to Transcarpathia by supplying pharmaceuticals worth HUF 4 million for the daily peritoneal dialysis treatment of patients suffering from end-stage renal failure. This was announced by the press service of the regional state administration of Transcarpathia on Monday.

According to the statement from the office, due to the inaction of the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and the Anti-Monopoly Committee, it was not possible to procure the necessary dialysis preparations for Transcarpathian patients suffering from end-stage renal failure. The statement mentions that currently, there are 18 patients in the region who require daily peritoneal dialysis. It also states that even though funds are available for the purchase of dialysis preparations, the Anti-Monopoly Committee continuously hinders the procurement of medications due to a complaint from one of the intermediary companies.

182 MTI news archive, February 13, 2017.

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According to the regional office, Hennadiy Moskal, the Governor of Transcarpathia Oblast, has made several personal appeals to both the Ministry of Health and the Committee, but his attempts have been unsuccessful. To save the lives of the patients, the leader of the Ukrainian region turned to the Consulate of Hungary in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) for assistance last week. In response, the Hungarian government allocated HUF 4 million (approximately 400,000 hryvnias) within two days. With this funding, life-saving medication for kidney patients in Transcarpathia was procured and will be handed over to the Transcarpathian Regional Clinical Hospital as humanitarian aid on Monday evening, as stated in the press release.

As quoted in the statement, Mr. Moskal stated that the critical situation regarding the provision of medication for kidney patients is solely due to the inaction of the Ministry of Health and the Anti-Monopoly Committee. He emphasized that patients are dying due to the lack of medication, but their lives mean nothing to the officials.

“Starting from Tuesday, the patients suffering from chronic kidney failure in Transcarpathia will receive the necessary treatment for nearly a month, thanks to the goodwill of the Hungarians who fulfilled our request,” said Mr. Moskal expressed his sincere gratitude, on behalf of the entire Transcarpathian region, to the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), as well as the Hungarian government for their quick response to his request and for helping the seriously ill patients in Transcarpathia.¹⁸³

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APRIL 27, 2017 – ISTVÁN GREZSA: ANOTHER FIVE HUNDRED UKRAINIAN CHILDREN TO GO ON VACATION IN HUNGARY WITH SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

The office of the Hungarian government commission for Transcarpathia is to organize the summer vacation for an additional 500 children at Lake Balaton this year, Government Commissioner István Grezsa announced.

Mr. Grezsa added that he informed the representatives of the Ukrainian government about this initiative during his two-day visit to Ukraine, which started on Wednesday. He explained that the vacation will be organized for Ukrainian elementary school students who are learning the Hungarian language.

He reminded that during the recent visit of Miklós Soltész, State Secretary for Churches, Minorities and Civil Affairs at the Ministry of Human Resources, it was announced that Hungarian state support will once again allow 700 Ukrainian children, along with their companions, to spend their holidays in Hungary this year. The opportunity is offered to children who have lost their fathers or had them injured during the armed conflict in the Donbas region.

Mr. Grezsa also informed his Ukrainian counterparts that the government commissioner's office is relaunching the Department of Ukrainian Language and Culture at the University of Nyíregyháza.

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He mentioned that on Tuesday, together with Lyubov Nepop, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Hungary, they will visit on the twelve Ukrainian soldiers at Hajdúszoboszló who were injured in the armed conflict in the Donbas region. These soldiers are participating in a rehabilitation program in the eastern Hungarian city, funded by private donations.

István Grezsa also informed his Ukrainian counterparts about the ongoing Hungarian development program in Transcarpathia. He emphasized that the goal of this program is to keep the Hungarian minority in Ukraine connected to their homeland and provide the community with a vision for the future.

Moreover, he highlighted that Hungary, to the best of its ability, aims to assist not only the Hungarian communities in Ukraine but also the Ukrainian majority. Among these investments, he mentioned the comprehensive renovation of the pediatric department in the hospital in Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv).¹⁸⁴

JUNE 19, 2017 – MORE THAN SIX HUNDRED CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES INVOLVED IN THE UKRAINIAN WAR ARE CAMPING AT LAKE VELENCE

Thanks to the support of the Hungarian government, 660 children and accompanying adults who have been affected

184 MTI news archive, April 27, 2017.

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by the war in Ukraine can participate in a several-week-long camp at Lake Velence. An announcement to this effect was made in Agárd, by the State Secretary for Churches, Minorities and Civil Affairs at the Ministry of Human Resources on Monday.

According to information provided by Miklós Soltész, volunteers have identified Ukrainian and Hungarian children between the ages of 6 and 13 whose fathers have fought or are currently fighting in Eastern Ukraine. He reminded that this is the third year of the camp, with 550 participants in the first year and 600 last year. This year an additional ten percent more children and their accompanying adults can enjoy their time at the Velence Water Sports School in Agárd.

The State Secretary noted that no other European country provides this type of support to the war-affected Eastern European state.

Miklós Soltész announced that the government is providing HUF 45 million in funding for the program this year. Last week, the first and largest group, a total of 120 children arrived in Agárd. Currently, there are about sixty children at the camp, the majority of whom are Ukrainian, with only a few being native Hungarian speakers from Transcarpathia, he added.

According to the State Secretary, the camp has received highly positive feedback throughout Ukraine. He believes that the children participating in the camp “serve as ambassadors for Hungary and Ukraine, strengthening the cooperation between the two nations in the interest of the Hungarian minority living in Transcarpathia.”

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Jaroslava Hartyányi, the parliamentary representative of the Ukrainian minority in Hungary, expressed that “Hungary acts as a true neighbor and friend”.¹⁸⁵

JULY 4, 2017 – DONATION FOR TRANSCARPATHIAN HOSPITALS FROM THE TRANSCARPATHIAN GOVERNMENT COMMISSION OF THE PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE

Government Commissioner István Grezsa handed over a healthcare donation consisting of medical equipment and hospital furnishings, with a total value of over €400,000, at the Záhony-Csap (Chop) border crossing on Tuesday. The donation was raised by a Bavarian medical professor with Transcarpathian roots, Ferenc Szabad, for hospitals in Transcarpathia. Mr. Grezsa stated during the on-site press conference that the donation, consisting of healthcare equipment and medical devices with an original value exceeding €2 million (approximately HUF 620 million), was raised by Professor Ferenc Szabad, a Bavarian medical doctor of Transcarpathian origin, who is the chief physician at the Bad Neustadt Clinic. The donation is intended for the hospitals in Transcarpathia, which are currently facing difficult circumstances. The cost of transport was covered by the Transcarpathian Government Commission of the Prime Minister’s Office, so it does not impose any financial burden on the people of Transcarpathia, Mr. Grezsa added.

185 MTI news archive, June 19, 2017.

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He expressed his gratitude to the Transcarpathian branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross for receiving the healthcare donation and organizing its distribution and reminded that the Hungarian government has supported the healthcare system in Transcarpathia on multiple occasions in recent times. He noted that healthcare assistance symbolizes the good intentions of the Hungarian government. As he stated, “corresponding to the ethnic proportions of the area, no more than 12 percent of our support is going to our compatriots. The vast majority of the equipment provided will benefit the Ukrainian majority.” “We hope that these gestures also demonstrate that Hungary is a reliable and good ally to Ukraine,” he said.

Greza also expressed gratitude for “the continuous support from the leadership of the Transcarpathian Oblast, whereby this cooperation can strengthen the relations between the two countries based on common interests.”

Viktor Mikulin, Deputy Governor of Transcarpathia, stated to journalists that healthcare support from Hungary to Transcarpathia is regular and consistent. “I can confidently say that the healthcare shipments received from Hungary have saved lives in Transcarpathia,” he pointed out, noting that healthcare reform is underway in Ukraine, making the equipment provided to healthcare institutions in Transcarpathia invaluable. The equipment, distributed by the local Red Cross, will reach the entire region.¹⁸⁶

186 MTI news archive, July 4, 2017.

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JULY 6, 2017 – PÉTER SZIJJÁRTÓ IN LONDON: HUNGARY IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING UKRAINE'S REFORMS

On Thursday, Péter Sziijártó said in London that based on its neighboring status and in the interests of the 150,000 Hungarians living in Ukraine, Hungary is a committed and strong supporter the reform processes in Ukraine.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, who participated in the London conference on Ukrainian reforms organized by the British and Ukrainian governments, told MTI that Hungary considered it unfair that the European Union has repeatedly delayed visa liberalization and the association agreement.

Mr. Sziijártó stated that Hungary has done a great deal to support the success of Ukrainian reforms, including a \$50 million credit for infrastructure development. At the London conference on Thursday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs reached an agreement with his Ukrainian counterpart to establish a working group focused on identifying specific infrastructure development programs.

He also mentioned that there is a concerning phenomenon that Hungary cannot remain silent about. There are currently three proposals before the Ukrainian parliament, if which are adopted – and it seems there is political will to do so – the situation of minorities, including the Hungarian minority, would significantly deteriorate.

One of these draft laws would penalize dual citizenship, another would significantly restrict, and in the case of Hungarians practically eliminate the possibility of native language education of scattered communities. The third would greatly limit the use of the native language, undermining the rights of the Hungarian minority.

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Péter Szijjártó stated that during the London conference, he made it clear to his Ukrainian counterpart that this would be unacceptable for the Hungarian government, as these laws would contradict European norms. Therefore, Hungary will protest against them at every possible forum.

Hence, The Hungarian Foreign Minister asked the representatives of the Ukrainian government to prevent these legislative proposals from being passed in the Ukrainian Parliament.

“We are willing to continue helping Ukraine in the future, but these would be unacceptable amendments that would clearly and significantly impact our future relations,” Mr. Szijjártó stated, adding that the Ukrainian side has promised to maintain communication and rational dialogue, but according to the Hungarian government, the most reassuring solution would be the withdrawal of these legislative proposals.¹⁸⁷

SEPTEMBER 1, 2017 – GOVERNOR OF TRANSCARPATHIA: NUMBER OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISES INCREASED BY THREE THOUSAND DUE TO HUNGARIAN SUPPORT

Hennadiy Moskal, the Governor of Transcarpathia, announced on Friday that the number of private businesses in Transcarpathia has increased by about three thousand thanks to economic development support from Hungary.

187 MTI news archive, July 6, 2017.

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Since the beginning of the year, approximately 400 new businesses have been registered in Beregszász (Berehove).

The majority of new businesses in the area have been established through the support provided by the Egán Ede Transcarpathian Economic Development Center, which is the economic development program run the Hungarian government for local residents, reminded the Governor. He added that the activities of the Egán Ede Center extend not only to the Berehove district but also to the areas of Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv), Ungvár (Uzhhorod), Munkács (Mukachevo), Huszt (Khust) and Técső (Tyachiv).

In his statement, the county leader explained that the newly established private businesses bring new jobs, budget revenues, new agricultural machinery, and tourism facilities that will contribute to the prosperity of Transcarpathia and will serve the region instead of leaving Ukraine. Hennadiy Moskal expressed his desire for Ukraine to have favorable microcredit and grant support opportunities in every region, especially in areas with limited job opportunities, similar to opportunities currently available in Transcarpathia.

On August 21, 2017, Hungarian State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Levente Magyar stated in Beregszász (Berehove), where a thousand entrepreneurs signed grant agreements within the framework of the HUF 7.5 billion economic development support provided by the Hungarian government to the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, that the Hungarian government disbursed over HUF 2 billion in support through the Egán Ede Transcarpathian Economic Development Program to the Hungarian commu-

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nity in Transcarpathia at the end of the previous year. Approximately 14,000 people benefited from this sum. 13,000 applicants had their land privatization costs covered to start farming, while one thousand Hungarian entrepreneurs received support for the development of their existing businesses. According to the State Secretary, the Hungarian government supports the development of Hungarian businesses in Transcarpathia with a total of approximately HUF 10 billion within a year, benefiting a total of around 17,000 families.¹⁸⁸

SEPTEMBER 25, 2017 – LÁSZLÓ KÖVÉR: HUNGARY ALSO SUPPORTS TRANSCARPATIA IN THE FIELD OF CHILD HEALTH

Hungary supports Transcarpathia in the field of children's healthcare as well, as it is of utmost importance for both Hungarians and Ukrainians to ensure the health and safety of their children, stated László Kövér, the Speaker of the National Assembly, on Monday in Beregszász (Berehove). Kövér, as the President of the Hungarian Association of International Children's Safety Service, handed over medical equipment to the pediatric department of Berehove Central District Hospital.

During the handover ceremony, László Kövér noted that he considers it an honor to be able to present donations raised by the Hungarian Association of Cities with County

188 MTI news archive, September 1, 2017.

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Rights on behalf of the International Children's Safety Service to children's healthcare institutions in Transcarpathia.

The donation is worth a total of HUF 70 million. It is important that this support serves the healing of sick children, however, at the same time, sends a symbolic message that Hungary seeks to maintain good relations with Ukraine and wants to help the people of Transcarpathia, regardless of their ethnicity. Mr. Kövér highlighted that Transcarpathian Hungarians can continue to rely on Hungary.

Ákos Kriza, chairman of the Hungarian Association of Cities with County Rights and mayor of Miskolc, highlighted that the association has donated over HUF 100 million to Transcarpathia in recent years, two-thirds of which serve healthcare.

Viktor Mikulin, Deputy Governor of Transcarpathia, expressed gratitude on behalf of the regional leadership to the Hungarian benefactors and the Hungarian government for their invaluable support in children's healthcare. He expressed hope that the issues would be resolved soon and that the exemplary relations between Ukraine and Hungary would be restored.

In relation to the new Ukrainian education law, László Kövér stated that "in addition to healing children, the education of children is also very important. Therefore, I consider the decisions of the Ukrainian parliament in this regard to be catastrophic. I have great hope that President Petro Poroshenko will wisely resolve the situation, and the law will not come into effect. I hope that they will find a way for Hungarian children to learn in their mother tongue from kindergarten to university."¹⁸⁹

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SEPTEMBER 25, 2017 – LÁSZLÓ KÖVÉR INAUGURATED A RENOVATED HOSPITAL PEDIATRIC WARD IN NAGYSZŐLŐS (VYNOHRADIV) WITH HUNGARIAN SUPPORT

László Kövér, the Speaker of the National Assembly and chairman of the Hungarian Association of the International Children's Safety Service, officially inaugurated the renovated pediatric ward of the Vynohradiv District Hospital. The ward support from Hungary totaling nearly HUF 36 million.

During the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Kövér emphasized that the Hungarian assistance provided has been directed to the right place, as Ukraine is facing many challenges.

He added that when it comes to sick children, the question of support should not be a subject of debate, as it is crucial to create appropriate conditions for their healing.¹⁹⁰

OCTOBER 25, 2017 – SIX HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE KINDERGARTENS IN TRANSCARPATHIA RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN SUPPORT

On Wednesday, István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for coordinating development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, officially handed over six Hungarian nursery schools that were

189 MTI news archive, September 25, 2017.

190 MTI news archive, September 25, 2017.

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renovated as part of the Carpathian Basin kindergarten development program in Transcarpathia.

A press conference was held at the Nagydobrony (Velyka Dobron) nursery school in the district of Ungvár (Uzhhorod) as part of kindergarten handover ceremonies affecting six Hungarian-inhabited settlements in the area of Ungvár (Uzhhorod) and Munkács (Mukachevo). During the conference, the Government Commissioner stated that in the first phase of the kindergarten development program, 22 new nurseries will be built or established and a further 80 will be renovated. In the second phase, 10 new kindergartens will be built and an additional 50 will undergo modernization. Both phases will involve several kindergartens, accompanied by comprehensive training courses, he added. He also announced that every Hungarian kindergarten in Transcarpathia will have a play corner or Hungarian corner established before Christmas, which will enhance children's connection to the Hungarian language and culture. Additionally, each nursery school will be provided with a laptop preloaded with 55 gigabytes of Hungarian cartoons.

István Grezsa stated that the Hungarian government has allocated a total of HUF 4.5 billion for the modernization and construction of Hungarian kindergartens in Transcarpathia. Their main objective is to increase the number of children attending Hungarian kindergartens from 54,000 to 64,000 in the Carpathian Basin. He pointed out that the implementation of the kindergarten development program is of special significance in Transcarpathia, as the region's infrastructure is in very poor condition and extensive construction work is required.¹⁹¹

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DECEMBER 14, 2017 – KÁROLY CZIBERE HANDS OVER AID DONATIONS IN TRANSCARPATHIA

Károly Czibere, the State Secretary for Social Affairs and Inclusion at the Ministry of Human Resources, and Márton Juhász, the Director of the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, ceremoniously handed over a worth HUF 8.2 million to local soup and hospital kitchens, the soup kitchens operated by the Reformed Church, and the Sámuel Foundation in Beregszász (Berehove). The donation was delivered on Thursdays, consisting of non-perishable food items and financial support.¹⁹²

191 MTI news archive, October 25, 2017.

192 MTI news archive, December 14, 2017.

2018

JANUARY 18, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA HANDS OVER RENOVATED ROOF STRUCTURE OF THE TRANSCARPATHIAN PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

Government Commissioner István Grezsa ceremoniously handed over the renovated roof structure of the infectious diseases department at the Children’s Hospital in Transcarpathia on Thursday in Mukachevo. The renovation was supported by a HUF 4.5 million grant from the Hungarian government.

During the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Grezsa, who is responsible for the cooperation and coordinated development projects between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, mentioned that he visited the county children’s hospital nearly two years ago. He was shocked to witness that the roof of the over a hundred-year-old building housing the infectious diseases department had been leaking for years, and that the treatment of patients was taking place in such poor conditions. At the time, a decision was reached for Hungary to contribute HUF 4.5 million towards the renovation of the approximately 800 square meters of roof structure. However, due to bureaucratic obstacles, the works could only be completed recently, he added.

The government commissioner reminded that in 2016, the Hungarian government decided to provide comprehensive vaccination coverage for all age groups in Transcarpathia for a period of five years, implying an annual cost of approximately HUF 1 billion. Currently, measles is

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spreading in Ukraine, including Transcarpathia. Therefore, Hungary is providing vaccine assistance to the neighboring Ukrainian region, as the measles vaccination coverage among children is only around 25 percent, Mr. Grezsa said. He also noted that Hungary will continue its healthcare support for the entire society of Transcarpathia this year. With these gestures, Hungary expresses its intention to be a reliable and good neighbor to Ukraine. He emphasized that the support provided to the children's hospital is also a signal from Hungary to the leadership in Kyiv that the relationship between the two countries should be built on cooperation rather than flawed legislation.¹⁹³

JANUARY 26, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA HANDED OVER EIGHT THOUSAND DOSES OF MEASLES VACCINE AS EMERGENCY AID TO TRANSCARPATHIA

On Friday, István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner for Transcarpathia, handed over 8,000 doses of measles vaccine, valuing a total of HUF 100 million, as humanitarian aid to the Transcarpathia branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross in Ungvár (Uzhhorod). Top of Form

During a press conference held on the occasion of the delivery of the shipment, he emphasized that the Hungarian government responded rapidly to the request made by Hen-

193 MTI news archive, January 18, 2018.

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nadiy Moskal, the governor of Transcarpathia, on Wednesday. Due to the swift action of Zoltán Balog, the Minister of Human Resources, the shipment consisting of one of the world's most advanced measles vaccines, worth HUF 104 million and containing eight thousand doses, was delivered to Transcarpathia within only three days. He added that based on the principle that "giving quickly is giving twice," Hungary once again demonstrated that it is a reliable partner to Ukraine, despite the deterioration of inter-state relations. He noted that measles is not ethnicity-dependent, so the vaccine, just like the wide range of healthcare support previously provided by Hungary to Transcarpathia and Ukraine, will be given to those in need regardless of ethnicity.

Referring to the widespread resistance to vaccinations within Transcarpathian society, the government commissioner urged parents to ensure that their children receive the measles vaccine, as it is of excellent quality and completely safe. He also reminded that Hungary has already delivered five thousand doses of vaccine against measles to Transcarpathia last spring, and it will deliver an additional seven thousand doses to Ukraine this year. This is in accordance with the 2016 agreement, in which Hungary committed to providing complete vaccination coverage for the region's age groups for five years, for a total of HUF 1.2 billion annually.

Hennadiy Moskal, the Governor of Transcarpathia, stated to journalists that he turned to Hungary for assistance through the mediation of the Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) after his request for measles vaccines from the

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Ukrainian Minister of Health yielded no results earlier this week. According to Mr. Moskal, there is not a single vial of the vaccine left in the county, while due to the rapidly spreading infection, most nurseries and schools in the areas of Técső (Tyachiv) and Ilosva (Irshava) had to be closed. He added that Hungary has previously provided emergency healthcare support to Transcarpathia on multiple occasions, including a few months ago, when they saved the lives of nearly twenty kidney patients by promptly supplying the county with dialysis medications. Criticizing the inadequate performance of Ukrainian health authorities, he indicated that Transcarpathia is completely lacking antivenoms for snakebites, as well as vaccines for rabies and tetanus.

The Governor expressed his gratitude to the Government of Hungary, the Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) and István Grezsa for their support provided to Transcarpathia.¹⁹⁴

FEBRUARY 15, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA HANDED OVER HIGH-VALUE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO FAMILY DOCTORS IN TRANSCARPATHIA

At a ceremonial event, Government Commissioner István Grezsa handed over medical equipment worth over HUF 38 million to the regional organization of the Ukrainian Red Cross in Transcarpathia. These medical devices are necessary for the operation of primary care services in Transcar-

194 MTI news archive, January 26, 2018.

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pathia. The handover took place on Thursday in Tiszasalamon (Solomonovo), located near the Ukrainian-Hungarian border.

During the ceremony, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of cooperation and coordinated development projects between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, stated that as part of the ongoing healthcare reform in Ukraine, the country is planning to create a general practice system similar to that of Hungary. However, there is a significant development gap compared to Hungary in the Ukrainian healthcare system and Hungary has therefore been striving to provide support in various areas to assist Transcarpathia in catching up. He added that in addition to material support, they provide opportunities for healthcare leaders to gain experience in Hungary, and also implement multi-stage Hungarian-language training for doctors.

Mr. Grezsa pointed out that thanks to the Hungarian support, the pediatric department of the hospital in Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) has recently been renovated, while the entire roof structure of the children's hospital in Munkács (Mukachevo) has been replaced. Moreover, at the end of last month, the Ukrainian county received 8,000 doses of measles vaccine worth over HUF 100 million.

The truckload of supplies which was handed over on Thursday, contains essential equipment needed for the basic setup of general practices, valuing HUF 38.7 million. The most important equipment includes 45 modern ECG devices and 50 complete computer systems. Additionally, the shipment includes inhalation devices, as well as pediatric and

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adult scales. Mr. Grezsa indicated that the medical equipment will be distributed among 57 offices in 5 districts.

He also mentioned that with the assistance of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association, they have assessed the conditions of Hungarian medical offices in Transcarpathia. Since they found poor conditions almost everywhere, Hungary will provide support for their modernization. It is unacceptable in the 21st century for such a gaping disparity to exist in the quality of healthcare services between different regions of the same nation, he emphasized. István Grezsa also announced that Hungary will soon deliver the vaccines necessary for age-specific vaccinations to be carried out in Transcarpathia.

Hennadiy Moskal, the Governor of Transcarpathia, expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government and Hungary for the healthcare support provided to Transcarpathia. As he emphasized, the equipment necessary for the operation of GP offices is particularly important, given the ratio of rural population in Transcarpathia is 63 percent, compared to the average of 33 percent in Ukraine. Therefore, providing emergency care is challenging, and it is the responsibility of local family doctors to offer such services. He expressed special thanks to the Hungarian government for the measles vaccine. He highlighted that without it, the situation would be very dire by now, as Kyiv has not sent a single vial of the vaccine to the county yet. He described it as a severe problem that the vaccine against tuberculosis will be completely depleted in Transcarpathia by early March.

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In connection with the investigation of the Molotov cocktail attack on the head office of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) on February 4, the county leader assured István Grezsa and the present leaders of Hungarian diplomatic missions operating in the county that he will do everything in his power to preserve ethnic peace and stability in Transcarpathia.¹⁹⁵

FEBRUARY 22, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA INAUGURATES KINDERGARTENS IN TRANSCARPATHIA RENOVATED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

Three renovated kindergartens were ceremoniously handed over by Government Commissioner István Grezsa in Transcarpathia on Thursday. The project is part of the kindergarten development program in the Carpathian Basin and was funded with HUF 13 million granted by the Hungarian government with the assistance of the Greek Catholic Church.

During the inauguration ceremony held at the Búza-*virág* Kindergarten in Beregdéda (Dyida) near Beregszász (Berehove), István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of cooperation and coordinated development tasks in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, and Transcarpathia, stated that within the framework

of the program, 25 kindergartens have been modernized in

¹⁹⁵ MTI news archive, February 15, 2018.

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recent months. Renovations took place under the coordination of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association. He emphasized that with the HUF 13 million support of the Hungarian government, three childcare institutions have been renovated in the present phase, not only locally but also in Makkosjános (Yanoshi) and Tiszabökény (Tysobyken) in the Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) district.

As the majority of the population in all three settlements is Greek Catholic, the renovation works were organized by the Greek Catholic Church. He described it as symbolic that the heating system in all three childcare institutions, which have a total capacity of approximately 120 places, has been completely renewed. This means that in addition to the homely atmosphere, actual warmth is now provided, as previously the temperature in the rooms often fell to 12-13 degrees Celsius during the winter.

The government commissioner indicated that the renovations and construction projects within the framework of the HUF 4 billion kindergarten development program will continue in Transcarpathia. Accordingly, the majority of these projects are expected to be completed this year. He expressed gratitude to the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia for their partnership and collaboration in kindergarten development program. He mentioned that the church will contribute an additional HUF 15 million from its own resources to support the renovation of several Hungarian institutions for children in Transcarpathia. Mr. Grezsa also described the cooperation with the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia and the Roman Catholic Church as successful. Additionally, he announced that the newly built St.

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Joseph nursery school in Munkács (Mukachevo) will soon be inaugurated.¹⁹⁶

MARCH 22, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA: HELPING THE WOUNDED OF THE UKRAINIAN WAR IS A CLEAR GESTURE

István Grezsa, the government commissioner responsible for coordinating the cooperation and development projects between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, stated during a press briefing in Hajdúszoboszló, that Hungary's support for the rehabilitation of Ukrainian soldiers wounded in the fighting in eastern Ukraine is a clear and unambiguous gesture.

Grezsa pointed out that this is the fourth occasion in the past two years when Ukrainian soldiers, who have suffered spiritual and physical wounds, have the opportunity to recover in Hungary.

The Hungarian government has committed to the rehabilitation of twenty soldiers each year, and despite the significant deterioration in the bilateral relations between the two countries in recent times, the program will continue. He further stated that over the past two years, more than 700 children of wounded soldiers have had the opportunity to enjoy holidays in Hungary.

196 MTI news archive, February 22, 2018.

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Lyubov Nepop, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Hungary, stated that the rehabilitation program demonstrates that despite their issues, the two countries are capable of coming together for a common good. She emphasized the importance of restoring trust and maintaining a good neighborly relationship for both sides. The ambassador referred to Hungary as a reliable and important partner of Ukraine and expressed hope that the Hungarian side shares the same view of Ukraine.

A week-long rehabilitation program provides medical examinations, treatments, and the benefits of the healing waters of Hajdúszoboszló for the soldiers. However, the program goes beyond the treatment of physical injuries and also aims to address the healing of psychological wounds.¹⁹⁷

MARCH 23, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HUNGARIAN SCHOOL IN TRANSCARPATHIA IS THE BEST RESPONSE TO THE UKRAINIAN EDUCATION LAW

The construction of the Hungarian school in Transcarpathia is the best response to the Ukrainian education law that restricts the linguistic rights of minority communities, stated Government Commissioner István Grezsa on Friday in Munkács (Mukachevo), as he officially inaugurated the new building of the St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Lyceum. The school was established with Hungarian state support.

197 MTI news archive, March 22, 2018.

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In his speech, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of cooperation and coordinated development projects between the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia emphasized the symbolic message conveyed by the expansion of the Lyceum with a new wing. He highlighted that this development is particularly significant in light of the Hungarian-Ukrainian dispute triggered by Article 7 of the new Ukrainian Education Law, which restricts Hungarian-language education.

István Grezsa emphasized that if the law is implemented without modifications, it will have a detrimental impact on all Hungarian educational institutions in Transcarpathia. He further explained that “the best response to this situation is the construction of Hungarian schools and the faith that characterizes the Roman Catholic Church in every corner of Transcarpathia”. Faith, he pointed out, is not about anything else, but indicating that even after a thousand years, we want to live as Hungarians in Transcarpathia, in the Carpathian Basin, as well as in the homeland, according to the beliefs of each denomination.

The government commissioner also stated that the new college building will not only serve as an educational institution, but also as a community space for the Hungarian community in Mukachevo. With its 200 square meters of floor space, smaller events can also be held there. “The inauguration of the college building, which was established through nearly HUF 80 million in Hungarian government support, carries the message and hope that the Roman Catholic and, in general, Hungarian education in Transcarpathia will become richer, expand, and improve in quality that also

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reflects the clear direction of Hungarian national policy, the need to preserve our Christian faith for our survival as Hungarians,” said István Grezsa.¹⁹⁸

APRIL 18, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA INAUGURATES OVER FIVE KINDERGARTENS IN TRANSCARPATHIA RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

On Wednesday, Government Commissioner István Grezsa ceremoniously handed over five Hungarian kindergartens that were renovated as part of the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program. The inaugurations took place in Beregszász (Berehove) and three neighboring settlements.

During the press conference held at the kindergarten in Sárosoroszi (Orosiyevo), István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, stated that in the first phase of the kindergarten development program, 24 kindergartens were already renovated and handed over earlier with the assistance of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association. By now, the modernization of another 19 kindergartens has been completed, including the five childcare institutions that were inaugurated on Wednesday. Mr. Grezsa added that

198 MTI news archive, March 23, 2018.

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the renovation and construction of a total of approximately 130 kindergartens are included in the two phases of the kindergarten development program, which encompasses all Hungarian-populated settlements in the region.

The Commissioner expressed his hopes that significant positive changes can be achieved in Hungarian-language education and upbringing in Transcarpathia through the implementation of the extensive kindergarten development project, which has a total value of HUF 4.5 billion. He believes that Hungarian kindergartens will become attractive to a wide range of people. Referring to the Ukrainian education law adopted in September last year, which is considered disadvantageous to the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, he remarked that “Hungary responds to these discriminatory measures with construction.”

Ildikó Orosz, head of Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association, expressed her gratitude to Hungary and its government for the diverse support provided so far. She emphasized the immense significance of the kindergarten development program for Transcarpathia, highlighting that prior to the renovations, the kindergartens of many Hungarian-populated settlements were built during the Soviet era. They used beddings purchased back in the Soviet times, the children slept on iron beds, and the rooms with saltpeter walls were heated with smoking tile stoves. She mentioned that in the upcoming second phase of the development program, new childcare institutions will be built in several Hungarian-populated villages. What is particularly important is that Hungarian kindergartens will be established in mountainous settlements such as Szerednye (Serednie),

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Nagyberezna (Velykyi Bereznyi) and Taracköz (Teresva), where institutionalized Hungarian-language education has been absent for over 70 years. She also stated that Association is ready to sign contracts related to the implementation of the second phase of the kindergarten development program and to organize renovation and construction works.¹⁹⁹

MAY 2, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA INAUGURATES KINDERGARTEN SPORTS FIELDS BUILT WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IN TRANSCARPATHIA

As part of the kindergarten development program in the Carpathian Basin, multifunctional kindergarten sports fields built with the support of the Hungarian government were inaugurated by Government Commissioner István Grezsa on Wednesday in Munkács (Mukachevo) and Nagydobrony (Velyka Dobron), in the Ungvár (Uzhhorod) area. The initiative was supported by the Ovisport Foundation.

At the inauguration ceremony held at the Hungarian-Language Kindergarten No. 17 in Munkács (Mukachevo), István Grezsa, the Government Commissioner responsible for the coordination of cooperation and coordinated development projects between the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, emphasized that it is not a coincidence that within the framework of the kindergarten development program, a unique experiential “kindergarten football field” is

199 MTI news archive, April 18, 2018.

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being established in four childcare institutions in Transcarpathia. As currently they are facing the most challenging situation among the Hungarian communities. This initiative is considered rare even in Hungary. “We would like to demonstrate that the refurbished nursery schools supported by the Hungarian government, which also enable sports activities, are of much higher quality than what is typically seen in Transcarpathia and Ukraine as a whole,” he added.

The government commissioner explained that through this type of support, Hungary also wants to signal to the majority Ukrainian nation that it is conducting quality, European-standard constructions in Transcarpathia. “By doing so, we also aim to set an example for Ukraine, which aspires to European integration, to encourage a mindset shift towards European commitment,” he said.

Andrea Molnár, the head of the Ovisport Foundation, told MTI that the extension of the program to build kindergarten sports fields to territories outside the country’s borders was among the final wishes of the renowned late footballer Jenő Buzánszky, a one-time member of the Golden Team.

“We saw a great opportunity in joining the Carpathian Basin kindergarten development program initiated by the Hungarian government. Since the foundation cannot use its own resources abroad, we turned to the Prime Minister’s Office for assistance, which supported our initiative with HUF 50 million,” she pointed out.²⁰⁰

200 MTI news archive, May 2, 2018.

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MAY 3, 2018 – FOUR MORE RENOVATED KINDERGARTENS RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ARE HANDED OVER IN TRANSCARPATHIA

On Thursday, Government Commissioner István Grezsa ceremoniously inaugurated four Hungarian kindergartens renovated within the framework of the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program. The kindergartens were handed over in four settlements near Beregszász (Berehove).

The government commissioner responsible for the coordination of development projects in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, emphasized during a press conference held at the kindergarten in Bótrágy (Batrad) on the occasion of the inauguration of the childcare institutions that the kindergarten development program has already shown tangible results in Transcarpathia. Not only has the number of children enrolled in Hungarian kindergartens increased, but there is also a sense of joy among the population in those settlements where the Hungarian government carries out kindergarten developments.

The government commissioner emphasized that with the kindergarten development program, the Hungarian government is strengthening the fundamental pillar of the educational system among the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

He expressed his hope that “the walls of the renovated kindergarten will be filled with a spirit of faith, and alongside that, they will be associated with a high pedagogical

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quality and standards that will attract not only children of Hungarian ethnicity.”²⁰¹

MAY 15, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA HANDS OVER HUMANITARIAN AID SHIPMENT IN TRANSCARPATHIA

Government Commissioner István Grezsa handed over a shipment over 38,000 doses of vaccines as humanitarian aid to the Transcarpathian branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross in Csap (Chop) on Tuesday. The value of the aid shipment exceeds HUF 180 million.

During the press conference held on the occasion of the handover, the Government Commissioner responsible for the cooperation and coordinated development projects of the²⁰² Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county and Transcarpathia emphasized that the shipment, consisting of 21,500 doses of pentavalent and 15,000 doses of trivalent vaccines, is the third one within a year through which the Hungarian government supports Ukrainian healthcare in Transcarpathia. This is part of the five-year project launched last year, through which Hungary fully provides or supplements age-specific vaccinations in Transcarpathia, he added.

The government commissioner explained that every Transcarpathian child in need will be vaccinated with

201 MTI news archive, May 3, 2018.

202 MTI news archive. May 15, 2018.

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world-class vaccines against the most common childhood diseases, regardless of ethnicity. The goal is to achieve the same level of vaccination coverage among children in Transcarpathia as in Hungary. On the one hand, every family in Transcarpathia benefits from the support, and on the other hand, the program strengthens Hungary's "healthcare border protection," he pointed out. Mr. Grezsa expressed his gratitude for the cooperation of Hungarian organizations in Transcarpathia, the leadership of Transcarpathia County, Governor Hennadiy Moskal, and the Ukrainian customs authorities in implementing the project.

He also referred to the scandal caused by a January statement by the acting Ukrainian Minister of Health, Ulana Suprun, in which she referred to the eight thousand doses of measles vaccine delivered as emergency aid, requested by the governor of Transcarpathia, as Hungarian smuggled goods. Mr. Grezsa expressed his hope that the central Ukrainian media will objectively report on the current aid shipment this time. He indicated that the anti-Hungarian media campaign that has been ongoing in the Kyiv media for the past two years does not benefit the relationship between the two countries.

In response to a journalist's question, the government commissioner stated that despite strained relations between the two countries, the Hungarian government will continue with the program of hosting Ukrainian children in Hungary and providing medical treatment in Hungary for injured Ukrainian soldiers this year.

Hennadiy Moskal expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government, the Ministry of Human Resources, and Ist-

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ván Grezsa, as well as the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), for the significant healthcare support provided to Transcarpathia. He also noted that Hungary takes responsibility for the treatment of most of the injured Ukrainian soldiers. According to him, the support from Hungary is extremely important and it saves lives, given there is a significant shortage of vaccines in Ukraine. This is due to the Ministry of Health not procuring an adequate quantity and quality of vaccines from abroad. He highly appreciated that the Hungarian government supplies Transcarpathia with high-quality vaccines manufactured in America, adding that Ukraine has not been purchasing pentavalent vaccines for years, and the highest quality vaccines they acquire are produced in India. He urged the Ukrainian Ministry of Health to take an example from Hungary in terms of vaccine procurement instead of resorting to defamation. The governor condemned what he believed to be an unfounded campaign of the Ukrainian commercial media, that fuels hostility between Hungary, the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, and against himself. Mr. Moskal emphasized that for him, the relationship between Kyiv and Budapest is not important, but rather the preservation of good relations between Transcarpathia and Budapest.²⁰³

203 MTI news archive. July 21, 2018.

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JULY 21, 2018 – HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT DONATES CHLORINE TO CLEAN TRANSCARPATHIAN WATER

Tamás Menczer, the State Secretary responsible for international representation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made a statement to MTI on Saturday, in which he informed that Hennadiy Moskal, the Governor of Transcarpathia, made an “immediate request for assistance” to Hungary through the Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) due to the “crisis situation related to public drinking water supply.” He explained that an interruption in production at the Dni-pro-Azot chemical plant, the sole local producer of liquid chlorine used in water treatment, has jeopardized the safe supply of drinking water in the region.

“Hungary is contributing to the situation by donating 15 tons of chlorine as humanitarian aid, ensuring access to clean drinking water for the people of – Transcarpathia,” the statement concludes.

On his official website, Mr. Moskal reminded that chlorine is used to disinfect water at 18 waterworks in Transcarpathia, and that the depletion of chlorine supplies would inevitably lead to the emergence of infectious diseases. In order to prevent this, Mr. Moskal said that he had appealed to Hungary, which had complied with his request and was providing humanitarian aid to Transcarpathia.

The Governor said that they were now working on how to transport the liquid chlorine as soon as possible. The shipment is expected to arrive as early as next week. For the time being, there is enough chlorine to last for a month and a half, during which time it is hoped that production will resume in Dni-pro-Azot.

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“On behalf of the whole of Transcarpathia, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hungarian government, which always responds to the problems of the country and comes to its aid. As it is known, a friend in need is a friend indeed,” Mr. Moskal wrote.²⁰⁴

JULY 24, 2018 – FIRST SHIPMENT OF LIQUID CHLORINE DONATED BY HUNGARY ARRIVES TO TRANSCARPATIA

On Tuesday, the first shipment of three tons of liquid chlorine donated by the Hungarian government as emergency aid to treat household water supplies at the request of Transcarpathia’s governor Hennadiy Moskal, has arrived to the area.

The Governor reached out to the Hungarian government last week through the country’s consulate in the city, requesting 15 tons of liquid chlorine as a humanitarian aid to address the crisis situation related to the public drinking water supply in Transcarpathia. This crisis emerged as a result of the shutdown of the only chemical plant in Ukraine that produced liquid chlorine. Due to the chlorine shortage, the supply of drinking water for millions of people nationwide, including hundreds of thousands of people in Transcarpathia, was jeopardized.

204 MTI news archive, July 21, 2018.

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József Buhajla, the Hungarian Consul General in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), handed over the chlorine shipment to Mr. Moskal on the Ukrainian side of the border crossing at Chop (Csap). The consul stated in a press interview that this humanitarian aid is also a very important support from Hungary, as it aims to address the crisis that has arisen in Transcarpathia regarding the supply of drinking water. "Once again, Hungary has offered a helping hand to Transcarpathia, regardless of nationality, given water is consumed by everyone. Thus, the danger of infection, due to untreated drinking water, threatens everyone," he emphasized. He added that the value of the current bottled chlorine shipment is approximately HUF 6 million, and Hungary also covered the costs of transportation.

The diplomat also mentioned that if needed, Hungary will deliver the remaining 12 tons of chlorine requested, noting that the chlorine production facility in Ukraine has since been reinstated. In response to a question from a Ukrainian journalist about how the Hungarian government perceives Transcarpathia's frequent requests of assistance, József Buhajla explained that it indicates the Ukrainian government's lack of concern for the problems in the region. This includes issues such as the supply of vaccines against infectious diseases or the state of the road network. As a good neighbor, Hungary will always assist Ukraine if requested, despite the tense relationship between the two countries, the consul stated.

Mr. Moskal said that the chlorine donation from Hungary will support the operation of 18 water utilities in Transcarpathia and provide clean drinking water to the population

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of the same number of settlements for a period of one and a half months. He added that the chlorine shortage in Ukraine was caused by internal political and oligarchic conflicts, which is why he believes, that there is a risk of production of liquid chlorine being suspended again in the future. He pointed out another major threat to the security of drinking water supply in Transcarpathia, which is the accumulation of huge debts by residential consumers to water utilities, as many people are unable to afford high water fees.

The Governor of Transcarpathia explained that as the region's leading authority, he is responsible for the providing services and safety of the population. Therefore, he sees no other option but to turn to the Hungarian government for emergency assistance.

Mr. Moskal expressed his gratitude to Hungary for invariably responding promptly and positively to his requests.²⁰⁵

AUGUST 5, 2018 – FINAL GROUP OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY THE EASTERN UKRAINIAN CONFLICT HAS LEFT FOR HOLIDAY AT LAKE VELENCE

The last group of children affected by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine were seen off at Chop (Csap) as they departed to Hungary for a government-funded week-long holiday at Lake Velence. Those leaving for Hungary included children

205 MTI news archive, July 24, 2018.

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participating in the international “Book of Goodness” project, who are heading for a reward trip to the Vatican.

Before the departure of 120 children fifteen accompanying adults, from the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine and other areas of the country, László Kuti, the Head of the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) made a statement to the press. According to Mr. Kuti, approximately 170 Ukrainian children from the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine and those connected to the anti-terrorist operation would have the opportunity to spend a week by Lake Velence this summer at the invitation of the Ukrainian Minority Self-Government of Hungary. The costs of the vacation are covered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The last group heading to the camp at Lake Velence consists of 35 children and 15 accompanying persons.

The diplomat also mentioned that along with those going to the camp, another 85 Ukrainian children participating the international social project “Jóság Könyve,” will also cross the Ukrainian-Hungarian border to travel to the Vatican. The children, accompanied by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, are set to meet Pope Francis. Mr. Kuti stated that the project, supported by the Ministry of Human Resources, the Hungarian Embassy in Kyiv, and the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), was implemented under the leadership of Vasily Vyshyvaniuk, Honorary Consul of Hungary in Ivano-Frankivsk.²⁰⁶

206 MTI news archive, August 5, 2018.

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AUGUST 11, 2018 – NEARLY 180 UKRAINIAN CHILDREN CAMPED AT LAKE VELENCE

On Saturday, the State Secretary responsible for churches, national minority relations and persecuted Christians announced at Velence that nearly 180 Ukrainian children participated in the summer camp at Lake Velence, which will conclude this week.

Miklós Soltész highlighted that Hungary has been hosting Ukrainian children for four years now, and including this year's nearly 180 participants, a total of two thousand Ukrainian children have had the opportunity to relax in Hungary during this time.

György Kravcsenkó, chairman of the Ukrainian National Self-Government of Hungary, stated that Ukrainian children from various regions including Kharkiv, Donetsk, Lviv, Ternopil, and Ivano-Frankivsk participated in three one-week sessions of camping in Velence between July 23 and August 12.²⁰⁷

NOVEMBER 7, 2018 – LARGE QUANTITY OF VACCINES HANDED OVER AS HUMANITARIAN AID BY ISTVÁN GREZSA IN TRANSCARPATIA

Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa handed over a vaccine shipment of more than 10,000 doses as humanitarian

207 MTI news archive, August 11, 2018.

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aid to the Ukrainian Red Cross in Transcarpathia on Wednesday in Csap (Chop). The aid was provided by the Hungarian government, valuing approximately HUF 50 million.

During the press briefing held at the Ukrainian-Hungarian border crossing on the occasion of the vaccine shipment handover, Mr. Grezsa expressed his delight that he has once again returned to Transcarpathia, following an unnecessary intergovernmental dispute about his title. He also expressed hope that they can continue building the relations between the two countries from where they left off. “With our work, we aim to contribute to the deepening of friendship between the two nations, as well as strengthening the relations between the multicultural Transcarpathia and Hungary,” he added.

Regarding the current vaccine donation, the Ministerial Commissioner stated that it fits into the series of initiatives created to assist the public health sector in Transcarpathia. He reminded that Hungary has already provided vaccine shipments to Transcarpathia on three previous occasions. Accordingly, the Ukrainian region bordering Hungary, has previously received 13,000 doses of measles vaccine and 22,000 doses of five-component, age-specific vaccines in two stages. While this time they will receive over 10,300 doses of four-component infant vaccines. “We aim to increase the vaccination coverage among children in Transcarpathia, which also serves the public health protection of Hungary,” he pointed out. Mr. Grezsa also emphasized that regardless of ethnicity, every Transcarpathian child in need will be vaccinated with world-class vaccines against the most common childhood diseases, adding that the health-

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care support provided to Transcarpathia will not stop, as Hungary will soon deliver a significant value and quantity of insulin preparations to the Ukrainian region, upon the request of Governor Hennadiy Moskal. This is due to the dangerously low insulin stock levels in the region. He noted that by delivering vaccines and other healthcare supplies as humanitarian aid, Hungary expresses its goodwill and commitment to good neighborly relations towards Ukraine. He hopes that as a result of gestures made by the Hungarian side, the Hungarian-Ukrainian relations will return to normal. The politician expressed his recognition and gratitude to Governor Hennadiy Moskal for facilitating the cooperation, stating that “we have always spoken the same language, and the simple reason for that is that we love Transcarpathia.”

Hennadiy Moskal expressed his gratitude to Hungary for the healthcare support, as well as his joy to welcome István Grezsa in Ukraine once again. He outlined the challenging situation of the healthcare sector in Transcarpathia, including the lack of necessary vaccinations for children due to deficiencies in central Ukrainian funding. He criticized the Ukrainian Ministry of Health for essentially leaving Transcarpathia without insulin preparations, putting 6,000-7,000 patients who require constant insulin treatment at risk. He highlighted that the lack of funds in the region’s budget prevents the procurement of necessary medications. According to him, thanks to the support of the Hungarian government, the provision of insulin for severely diabetic patients in the region will be resolved for approximately four months. The governor noted that the vaccines and oth-

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er medical supplies provided by Hungary are of world-class quality and, unlike those provided by Kyiv, have no significant side effects.²⁰⁸

NOVEMBER 16, 2018 – MONUMENT COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLODOMOR FAMINE IN UKRAINE UNVEILED IN SZEGED

The monument commemorating the innocent victims of the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933, the Holodomor was inaugurated on Friday at Dóm Square in Szeged. The monument was created by artists Bohdan Korzh and Mihailo Korotko from Ungvár (Uzhhorod).

Speaking at the event, Levente Magyar, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that Ukraine has survived even more trials than Hungarians in recent decades, including the battles of the Eastern Front in World War I, the Russian Civil War, Stalin's terror in the 1930s and 40s, that caused the death of millions of innocent children and civils. Later, World War II devastated the country once again, followed by the resistance in Western Ukraine that lasted until the late 1950s.

From the trials of history, the Holodomor stands out as the attempt of the Soviet regime to break the Ukrainian people through famine, Magyar recalled.

208 MTI news archive, November 7, 2018.

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He emphasized that Hungary has been standing by Ukraine since the beginning. Hungary supports nation-building in Ukraine as long as it respects the rights of others and does not go against anyone. He added that history has proven, that the Ukrainian people are strong enough that they need not turn against anyone when they seek to strengthen their own identity.

Lyubov Nepoch, Ukraine's Ambassador to Hungary, emphasized that Ukraine has always stood close to Hungary, which was one of the first nations to recognize the state's independence, then declaring the Holodomor a genocide.²⁰⁹

NOVEMBER 25, 2018 – GREEK CATHOLIC WOODEN CHURCH IN TISZABÖKÉNY (TYSOBYKEN) RENOVATED WITH SUPPORT FROM HUNGARY

The Greek Catholic wooden church in Tysobyken, which dates back to the 18th century, has been renovated with the support of the Rómer Flóris Plan and the involvement of the Teleki László Foundation.

According to the website of the MTI news archive, November 25, 2018. Rómer Flóris Plan, established in 2015 for the renovation of Hungarian cultural heritage sites in the Carpathian Basin, the Greek Catholic church in Tiszabökény (Tysobyken), a village known for its many denominations, has been successfully restored after its long and unfortunate history.²¹⁰

209 MTI news archive, November 16, 2018.

210 MTI news archive, November 25, 2018.

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NOVEMBER 25, 2018 – GREEK CATHOLIC ROCK CHAPEL OF TUKHOLKA, LVIV COUNTY, RENOVATED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

The Greek Catholic rock chapel in the village of Tukholka in Lviv Oblast was renovated with significant support from the Hungarian government, as a reciprocal gesture for the handover of the former Millennium Memorial to Hungary. The chapel was solemnly inaugurated on Sunday.

After the ceremonial liturgy, István Grezsa, the Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the development of cooperation between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, as well as for the coordination of the Nursery School Development Program in the Carpathian Basin, spoke to journalists. He stated that as a gesture of good neighborly relations, the Hungarian state supported the renovation works.

He stated that through the Bethlen Gábor Fund Management, the Hungarian government provided support of HUF 12.5 million for the renovation of the rock chapel named after the exaltation of the Holy Cross and its surroundings. This includes the restoration of the road leading to the Greek Catholic church on the hill. In order to support the region of Transcarpathia and the overall Hungarian-Ukrainian relations, not only the Hungarian side of the Carpathians but also the side facing Galicia could and should be served, he added.

He said it as good news that amidst the contentious Hungarian-Ukrainian interstate relations, the renovated chapel was consecrated together with the Greek Catholic Bishop of Lviv. This demonstrates that it is possible to cooperate

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well when understanding, trust, and love guide the parties involved, emphasized the Ministerial Commissioner.

The leadership and residents of Tukholka village in the Carpathian Mountains provided great assistance in locating and collecting the fragments of the former millennium monument. The monument was of importance to the Hungarians and was removed by Soviet authorities in the 1960s from the Verecke (Veretskyi) Pass. The fragments of the monument, which was originally built by the Bereg County in 1896, were found at the edge of a forest in one of the valleys on the Galician side of the pass. While the upper part of the monument was incorporated into a local Soviet military memorial.

As a sign of Ukrainian-Hungarian good neighborly relations and reconciliation, the discovered fragments of the monument were donated by the authorities of the Skole district and the village of Tukholka to the Hungarian government in 2014. After restoration and completion, these fragments were reintroduced as a millennium monument by László Kövér, the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, at the Ópusztaszer National Heritage Park on October 3, 2015.²¹¹

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NOVEMBER 27, 2018 – INCIDENT AT KERCH – SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY STANDS FOR THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF UKRAINE

Hungary fully supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. This has always been part of the Hungarian foreign policy and will remain so in the future, said Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at his press briefing in Budapest on Tuesday.

In addition to that, Hungary pays special attention to the 150,000 Hungarians living in Transcarpathia, emphasized the minister.

According to a Ukrainian parliament decision, martial law will come into effect on Wednesday morning in ten regions of Ukraine, but Transcarpathia is not among these regions, he announced.

It is always bad news when a neighboring country declares a state of war, and it is in the interest of every country, including Hungary, to have stable, strong, and peaceful neighboring countries, Mr. Szijjártó said. It is unfortunate for us that the relationship between Russia and Ukraine is not moving towards a solution and reconciliation, the minister pointed out.

Péter Szijjártó recalled that during conscriptions due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, he had discussions with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister upon the request of László Brenzovics, the President of The Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association. The Ukrainian Foreign Minister assured that the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia would not be disproportionately conscripted into the Ukrainian army,

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and according to the leaders of the local Hungarian community, Ukraine has kept this promise.

He noted that discussions take place with the leaders of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia twice a day continuously assess the situation.

The Ukrainian parliament passed a decree on Monday evening that introduced martial law, a form of a state of emergency, in ten southern regions. This decision came after the incident on Sunday at the Kerch Strait, where border patrol boats of the Russian Federal Security Service opened fire on three smaller Ukrainian naval vessels, seized them, and towed them to the port of Kerch, claiming that they had committed a border offence.²¹²

NOVEMBER 29, 2018 – KINDERGARTENS RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT WERE HANDED OVER IN TRANSCARPATHIA

As part of the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program, Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa ceremoniously handed over four more Hungarian kindergartens that have undergone renovation, at a total cost of approximately HUF 170 million, on Thursday.

At the inauguration ceremony of the renovated Hétszínvirág Nursery School in Szernye (Serne), near Munkács (Mukachevo), Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa ex-

212 MTI news archive, November 27, 2018.

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pressed his joy that the handover of renovated children's institutions in Transcarpathia, supported by the Hungarian government, is resuming after a several-month-long "forced break." As he stated, it is also great to witness that the institution handovers break the series of negative news that has characterized Hungarian-Ukrainian relations in recent times. At the same time, the ceremonies signal the Hungarian government's sincere intentions to create profound positive changes in the world of nursery schools, both in the Hungarian-populated and mixed-population settlements of Transcarpathia.

In her speech, Ildikó Orosz, the President of Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association, expressed her gratitude to the Hungarian government, and stated that the fortieth renovated Hungarian kindergarten in Transcarpathia will be unveiled on Thursday. She emphasized that this is a tremendous help for families, as parents can now have their children in civilized conditions. She stated that the Ukrainian state also benefits greatly from the Nursery School Development Program as it contributes to the "whitening" of the economy through tax payments; as all procurement and work are done officially and in compliance with the laws. Moreover, the project creates jobs, thereby reducing the need for people to seek employment abroad, emphasized the expert. The second phase of kindergarten development will commence in Transcarpathia next year.²¹³

213 MTI news archive, November 29, 2018.

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NOVEMBER 30, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA HANDS OVER A LARGE SHIPMENT OF INSULIN IN TRANSCARPATHIA

Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa and the President of the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity, László Lehel, handed over a shipment of insulin worth approximately HUF 40 million to the Transcarpathian branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross on Friday in Csap (Chop). The insulin shipment was provided as a humanitarian donation by the Ecumenical Charity and the Hungarian government.

During the joint press conference held at the Ukrainian-Hungarian border crossing in Csap (Chop) on the occasion of the ceremonial handover of the insulin preparations, Ministerial Commissioner Grezsa mentioned that the current humanitarian aid action was implemented through both state and non-state sources. He highlighted the role of the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity, which financed the purchase of the insulin preparations, in successfully delivering the medications to the patients within the deadline set by the Governor of Transcarpathia, Hennadiy Moskal, who requested the assistance. “This demonstrates that we have remained who we were, reliable partners of Transcarpathia and Ukraine,” emphasized the ministerial commissioner.

Mr. Moskal expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government and the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) for what he described as life-saving assistance. He reminded that there are 6,700 insulin-dependent diabetes patients in Transcarpathia who need to receive their medication every day, while the procurement of insulin preparations in the region has reached a catastrophic state. He explained that the Ukrainian Ministry of Health has termi-

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nated the central financing of insulin supply, burdening the already financially struggling local governments with the task. He believes that the aid shipment of insulin supplies will be sufficient for two months, and patients will have access to the necessary medications starting from Saturday.

According to Mr. Lehel, it is natural that the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity rushed to help the diabetic patients in Transcarpathia, as they provide assistance throughout Ukraine. He emphasized that they are particularly active in the eastern regions of Ukraine, where they have provided regular assistance to 50,000 people in ten different regions, worth over €1 million over the course of three years.

In response to an MTI inquiry, Mr. Grezsa confirmed that support for Transcarpathia will continue. Within this framework, the Hungarian government will support the renovation of 27 medical practices through a joint project with the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association. As he indicated, he handed over the first two renovated medical offices in Beregszász (Berehove) and Batár (Botar) on Friday. He added that the Hungarian government has already provided the necessary medical equipment for most Hungarian-populated settlements' practices during the spring. The equipment is in accordance with the requirements of the new Ukrainian healthcare law adopted in June. Additionally, he mentioned that the offices were in such poor condition that their renovation represents a leap of a century forward.²¹⁴

214 MTI news archive, November 30, 2018.

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DECEMBER 13, 2018 – ISTVÁN GREZSA: THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT PROVIDES ALL SUPPORT FOR THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF HUNGARIAN SCHOOLS IN TRANSCARPATHIA

The Hungarian government provides all necessary support for the successful development of Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia, Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa said. The remarks were made on Thursday in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), at the inauguration ceremony of the Hungarian-language Drugeth Secondary School's renovated building, which was funded by the Hungarian government.

In his welcome speech, the Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the development of cooperation between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, as well as for the coordination of the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program, emphasized that it is evident how much an increasingly strong homeland means for the historic Drugeth Secondary School in the 21st century.

Péter Kovács, the headmaster of the school, reminded the audience that the building, originally intended built as a nursery school and occupied by the institution in 2007, had never been renovated before. With the help of the Hungarian government, we were able to bring the interior of the building to an acceptable level in several stages. Now, thanks to the joint support of the State Secretariat for National Policy and the Hungarian cabinet, the exterior of the only Hungarian high school in the city has also been renovated at a total cost of HUF 18 million.

According to the headmaster, the 254 students of the Drugeth Secondary School can now study amongst suitable conditions. He indicated that the students achieve excellent

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results in various academic competitions and in university admissions as well.²¹⁵

DECEMBER 21, 2018 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE DONATES MINIBUS TO THE CHILDREN'S HOME IN SZOLYVA (SVALYAVA), TRANSCARPATHIA

A Volkswagen T6 minibus, worth HUF 10 million, was handed over at a ceremonial event on Friday by József Buhajla, Hungary's Consul in Ungvár (Uzhhorod). The vehicle was a gift from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to the children's home in Svalyava.

Regarding the donation of the vehicle, the diplomat stated over the phone in response to an inquiry from MTI that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade acted at the request of Hennadiy Moskal, the Governor of Transcarpathia. The donation is a sign of Hungary's goodwill, with the aim of promoting good neighborly relations, and considering the interests of children who represent a shared future. Furthermore, the vehicle improves the quality of life for more than a hundred children in need who are being raised in the children's home in Szolyva (Svalyava). He added that until now, the children's home had been transporting the children with a 25-year-old, worn-out minibus that was in a dangerous mechanical condition, posing a threat to the safety of the children.

215 MTI news archive, December 13, 2018.

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József Buhajla explained that considering the safety of the children, as part of the support plan and in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed on November 28 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Governor of Transcarpathia, the ministry purchased the vehicle in collaboration with the Hungarian Consulate General in Uzhhorod and the Charity Foundation of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association. The vehicle was selected by the chief physician of the children's institution, so the children can be safely transported to other cities for medical treatment. He indicated that the cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the children's home will continue next year. Within this framework, the Hungarian side will fund the construction of a building suitable for storing firewood.

László Brenzovics, the President of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association and its charity foundation who is also a member of the Ukrainian parliament, emphasized in his statement to MTI that by donating a minibus to the children's home in record time at the end of the year, the Hungarian government once again demonstrated its significant support for Transcarpathia, regardless of ethnicity. He recalled that the Hungarian government is to be thanked once again for providing humanitarian emergency aid worth hundreds of millions of forints to Transcarpathia this year, including vaccines, insulin medications, and essential liquid chlorine for water purification. "These are significant gestures that demonstrate Hungary's commitment to supporting Transcarpathia and Ukraine. We hope that these actions will eventually capture the attention of

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the Ukrainian government, leading to an improvement in Ukrainian-Hungarian relations next year,” Mr. Brenzovics pointed out.²¹⁶

216 MTI news archive, December 21, 2018.

2019

FEBRUARY 28, 2019 – MEDICAL PRACTISES RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ARE HANDED OVER BY PÉTER SZILÁGYI IN TRANSCARPATHIA

Péter Szilágyi, the Ministerial Commissioner for National Policy, ceremoniously handed over renovated medical practices in the villages of Tiszakeresztúr (Perekhrestya) and Fancsika (Fanchykovo) near Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) on Thursday. The medical practices were renovated with over HUF 10 million in support from the Hungarian government.

The Ministerial Commissioner emphasized that the Hungarian government has been providing significant support to Hungarian-speaking doctors, healthcare staff, and healthcare institutions in Transcarpathia since 2015. Consequently, two government decisions were made in 2017 to allocate a total of HUF 247 million and HUF 200 million HUF. The sum is allocated for the renovation of 38 healthcare institutions, primarily GP practices, as part of the healthcare support program provided to Transcarpathia, highlighted the Ministerial Commissioner. Mr. Szilágyi emphasized the importance that the healthcare support from Hungary, which improves living conditions, and benefits not only the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia but also the majority population.

Péter Szilágyi stated that in the future, the healthcare and other types of support for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia will continue, including assistance in education, social services, and infrastructure. He also referred to

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the announcement made by János Árpád Potápi on Wednesday in Budapest, suggesting that the development program for Hungarian base schools in Transcarpathia will continue. As part of this program, over 60 educational institutions will undergo renovations by 2021, with the funding exceeding HUF 10 billion.

“We consider the renovation of our medical practice as a milestone that significantly improves the life of our community. Previously, the facility was in a shameful condition, lacking even basic amenities such as running water, and even the roof was leaking. I believe that this investment will contribute to our community wanting to remain in their homeland,” Tiszakeresztúr (Perekhrestya) mayor István Dobsa told MTI. Expressing gratitude for the support from the Hungarian government and the Prime Minister’s Office, the local leader emphasized that with this gesture, Hungary has once again demonstrated itself as Ukraine’s most reliable neighbor, given that the assistance provided benefits not only the Hungarian community, but also the majority population.

After the event in Tiszakeresztúr (Perekhrestya), the ministerial commissioner inaugurated the renovated family practice in the nearby, ethnically mixed village of Fancsika (Fanchykovo). The renovation of practice was made possible through a HUF 3 million grant from the Hungarian government.²¹⁷

217 MTI news archive, February 28, 2019.

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APRIL 3, 2019 – EXHIBITION ON YAROSLAV THE WISE OPENS IN SZEGED

An exhibition showcasing the reign of Prince Yaroslav the Wise in the 11th century, as well as the Ukrainian diplomacy of the era through dynastic marriages, opened on Wednesday at the visitor center of the Votive Church and Cathedral in Szeged. The exhibition will welcome visitors until April 17.

László Kiss-Rigó, the Bishop of Szeged-Csanád, stated during the opening of the exhibition that knowledge of the past strengthens the identity of communities, which is necessary for society to remain healthy. The bishop suggested that if neighboring communities become familiar with each other's past, progress can be made towards unbiased and sincere relationships.

Lyubov Nepop, the Ukrainian Ambassador in Budapest and the initiator of the exhibition, emphasized that the friendship between the two nations has deep roots in the distant past.

An important element of this friendship is that King Andrew I sought refuge in Kievan Rus, and from there he returned to Hungary after marrying the daughter of the Prince, Anastasia.

The diplomat stated that Szeged makes significant efforts to foster relations between the two nations, such as the erection of the memorial for the victims of the 1932-1933 Ukrainian famine, the Holodomor, in November last year near the city's cathedral.²¹⁸

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MAY 14, 2019 – ISTVÁN GREZSA HANDS OVER A KINDERGARTEN SPORTS FIELD, RENOVATED NURSERIES AND MEDICAL PRACTICES IN TRANSCARPATHIA

On Tuesday, István Grezsa, the Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the development of cooperation between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia as well as for coordinating the kindergarten development program in the Carpathian Basin, ceremoniously inaugurated a kindergarten sports field, two renovated kindergartens and a medical practice in three Hungarian-populated settlements in Transcarpathia. The projects were realized with Hungarian government funding.

István Grezsa informed MTI over a telephone connection about the ongoing handover of educational and healthcare facilities that were built or renovated as part of the Hungarian state support provided to Transcarpathia. As part of the Nursery School Development Program, a multifunctional kindergarten sports field was inaugurated at the Mustármag nursery school in Visk (Vyshkovo) in the Upper Tisza region. “The facility is exceptionally unique and fully complies with modern pedagogical principles, placing emphasis on the early development of children’s motor skills,” he added.

Regarding the inauguration of the renovated medical practice in Visk (Vyshkovo), the ministerial commissioner

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stated that the inauguration of modernized family doctor's offices continues as part of the medical refurbishment program in Transcarpathia. Therefore, on Tuesday, another modernized facility will be unveiled in Tiszapéterfalva (Pyiterfolvo) in the Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) district. Mr. Grezsa added that the Hungarian government aims to contribute to the success of the healthcare reform in Ukraine through this support program, which improves the related infrastructure in Hungarian-populated areas in Transcarpathia.

The ministerial commissioner pointed out that the Hungarian government has provided and continues to provide assistance for the renovation of 27 medical offices within the framework of a project, implemented jointly with the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association. He emphasized that it is well known that the basic level of healthcare in Transcarpathia was in an unacceptably poor condition. Therefore, the Hungarian government has already provided the necessary basic medical equipment for all Hungarian-populated settlements, in accordance with the new Ukrainian healthcare law, a year ago.

Mr. Grezsa also pointed out that the poor condition of healthcare services in Ukraine is one of the reasons why the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia is leaving its homeland. "Through the healthcare assistance provided to Transcarpathia, the Hungarian government aims to encourage the Hungarian community to remain in its homeland," Mr. Grezsa stated. He emphasized that the renovation of the two kindergartens in Nagypalád (Velyka Palad) in the Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) district, carried out in collabora-

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tion with the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association, is an integral part of the Carpathian Basin kindergarten development program. Running on a total funding of HUF 6 billion, the scheme aims to modernize 139 nurseries and build 32 new childcare facilities in Transcarpathia. Mr. Grezsa stated that “this comprehensive program not only strengthens the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, but also makes it clear to members of the majority nation that Hungary is a reliable and good friend to Ukraine”.²¹⁹

AUGUST 30, 2019 – FINAL GROUP OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY THE CONFLICT IN EASTERN UKRAINE DEPARTS FOR CAMPING IN HUNGARY

On Friday, the last group of nearly 100 children affected by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine was ceremoniously bid farewell at Kincseshomok (Kholmok), near Uzhhorod, before their departure to Hungary. With the support of the Hungarian government, these children will spend a week of vacation by Lake Velence.

László Kuti, the acting Hungarian Consul in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), stated to the press during the farewell ceremony that this year, multiple groups totaling approximately 250 Ukrainian children, whose parent(s) died or were injured in the armed conflict, had the opportunity to spend their

219 MTI news archive, May 14, 2019.

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vacation in Hungary at the expense of the Hungarian government.²²⁰

This particular group consists of 90 children and 10 accompanying adults from 15 regions of Ukraine. He added that the Hungarian government has been supporting the summer camps for affected Ukrainian children in Hungary, since the beginning of the Eastern Ukrainian conflict in 2014. He indicated that in the past five years, children from several regions of Ukraine have been brought to Hungary for summer camps, where numerous interesting programs have been organized for them. Among other activities, every group participated in a trip to Budapest, including a visit to the Parliament building, he said.

Vasyl Vishivaniuk, Honorary Consul of Hungary in Ivano-Frankivsk, who coordinates the trips of the children from Ukraine to Hungary, expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government and the Hungarian Consulate in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) for their support in organizing the summer vacations for Ukrainian children in Hungary. According to his statement, so far, 3,500 children affected by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have spent a week of vacation in Hungary, from where they returned home with lifelong experiences and beautiful memories.²⁹⁰

220 MTI news archive, August 30, 2019.

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NOVEMBER 24, 2019 – GREEK CATHOLIC YOUTH CENTER BUILT WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IS INAUGURATED IN LVIV COUNTY

With the support of the Hungarian government and the involvement of the municipality of Fényeslitke, a Greek Catholic youth spiritual center was inaugurated ceremoniously in Tukholka, Lviv County. The facility was unveiled by István Íjgyártó, Hungary's ambassador to Ukraine, on Sunday.

After the consecration of the building with a Ukrainian Greek Catholic liturgy, István Íjgyártó told MTI in a telephone interview that the youth center will serve as a community-building, congregational, and meeting place for the youth of Tukholka and its surrounding villages. The facility will provide space for a Sunday school, a choir, singing lessons, and have a room suitable for film screenings. On the upper level, guest rooms will be created, thus supporting the development of rural tourism. Mr. Íjgyártó pointed out that with the support of the Hungarian government, a rock chapel and a crossroad were also built in Tukholka last year. The leadership and residents of Tukholka, located in the Carpathian Mountains, provided great assistance in finding and collecting the fragments of the former millennium memorial, which was of great importance to the Hungarians.

The monument was removed by Soviet authorities in the 1960s from the Verecke (Veretskyi) Pass. As a sign of Ukrainian-Hungarian good neighborly relations and reconciliation, local residents donated the recovered fragments of the memorial to the Hungarian state in 2014. After restoration and completion, these fragments were re-erected as a millennium memorial by László Kövér, the Speaker of the

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Hungarian National Assembly, at the Ópusztaszer National Heritage Park on October 3, 2015.²²¹

DECEMBER 4, 2019 – KINDERGARTEN RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IS HANDED OVER BY KÁROLY PÁNCZÉL IN UNGVÁR (UZHGOROD)

Károly Pánczél, the Chairman of the Committee on National Cohesion of the National Assembly, ceremoniously inaugurated a Ukrainian-Hungarian bilingual kindergarten that was renovated with the support of the Hungarian government. The ceremony took place in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) as part of the Committee's two-day visit to Transcarpathia. The Hungarian government provided approximately HUF 30 million in funding for the renovation of the kindergarten.

In his speech at the inauguration ceremony of the renovated Csengőcske Kindergarten, Károly Pánczél emphasized that since our most valuable treasures and talents are our children, we aim to create suitable, 21st-century conditions for their education in kindergarten as well. The Hungarian government launched the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program three years ago, which is the largest educational investment in the recent years. Within the framework of the scheme, HUF 47 billion is allocated for the

221 MTI news archive, November 24, 2019.

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construction and improvement of childcare facilities beyond the borders. Mr. Pánczél added that as part of the program, 110 new kindergartens are being built and over 700 are being renovated. He also indicated that in Transcarpathia, 23 new kindergartens are under construction and 120 kindergartens are being refurbished, including the newly inaugurated kindergarten in Ungvár (Uzhhorod). Additionally, playgrounds will be established or rebuilt in about forty different locations.²²²

DECEMBER 5, 2019. FAMILY DOCTOR'S OFFICE RENOVATED WITH HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT HANDED OVER BY HUNGARIAN POLITICIANS IN TRANSCARPATIA

Károly Pánczél, the chairman of the Committee on National Cohesion of the National Assembly, and Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa ceremoniously handed over a renovated family doctor's office in Zápszony (Zapson), near Beregszász (Berehove). The practice was renovated with the support of the Hungarian government. The nearly HUF 15 million cost of refurbishment was covered by a Hungarian government grant.

In his speech, Károly Pánczél reminded that the Hungarian cabinet launched a HUF 200 million program two years ago to modernize family doctor's practices in Transcarpathia. As part of this program, 27 healthcare institutions have

222 MTI news archive, December 4, 2019.

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been renovated or will be renovated in Hungarian-speaking and mixed-language communities, including 11 facilities in the area of Beregszász (Berehove).

István Grezsa, the Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the development of cooperation between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, as well as for the coordination of the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program, stated that the Hungarian government not only supported the renovation of the practices, but also provided them with basic equipment. He emphasized that the renovation of family doctor's offices in Transcarpathia is another proof that the Hungarian government is reliable and good partner to Ukraine. He highlighted that these practices provide healthcare not only to Hungarians, but to all ethnicities living in the region.

László Brenzovics, the Zápszony (Zapson)-boen chairman of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association, expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government and István Grezsa for their support in renovating the family doctor's offices in Transcarpathia. According to Mr. Brenzovics, medical practices in the Hungarian-populated settlements were previously in a disgraceful state. He pointed out that the healthcare reform and specifically the family doctor services were initiated two years ago in Ukraine, but the government did not allocate sufficient resources to support it. In light of this, the significance of the Hungarian government's support becomes clear.²²³

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FEBRUARY 5, 2020 – ANOTHER TRANSCARPATHIAN NURSERY IS MODERNIZED WITH SUPPORT FROM HUNGARY

A further in Transcarpathia has been renovated and modernized with the support of the Hungarian government, this time in the village of Csontos (Kostryna), State Secretary for National Policy Árpád János Potápi told MTI in a telephone interview.

Mr. Potápi expressed his joy that the nursery school in Csontos is the second institution in Transcarpathia to join the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program despite being attended, without exception, by ethnic Ukrainian children – due to the fact that the village, which is near the Slovakian border, is populated predominantly by Ukrainians. The program, which spans over the entire Carpathian Basin, is currently in its third phase, Mr. Potápi added.

The nursery school is currently attended by 40 children, whose parents have committed to having their children learn the Hungarian language within the framework of the educational program, the State Secretary explained. “It is important for us that in Transcarpathia, people of different nationalities get to know each other’s cultures, including Ukrainians getting familiar with the Hungarian culture,” he stated. “The culture of another nationality can perhaps be most easily understood through learning their language. The Transcarpathian region is closely connected to Hungarian history. Accordingly, it is an important step that after

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the inauguration of a kindergarten in Ökörmező (Mizhhiria) last year, we could now hand over a nursery here in Csonotos (Kostryna) as well. The renovation and modernization of this facility cost HUF 27.1 million,” the State Secretary revealed.²²⁴

FEBRUARY 11, 2020 – SZIJJÁRTÓ: THE GOOD RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT DEPEND ON THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

Hungary made another attempt to settle the Ukrainian-Hungarian relationship and the situation of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia in the recent days. Budapest’s proposal was delivered by the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó, in Kyiv on Friday, February 7.

Mr. Szijjártó met with Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Dmytro Kuleba, Minister of Foreign Affairs Vadym Prystaiko, and Minister of Education and Science Hanna Novosad in Kyiv.

According to MTI, Mr. Szijjártó stated the following during a press conference with his Ukrainian colleague: “We understand Ukraine’s expectation that every citizen living in its territory should be able to speak Ukrainian. However,

224 https://www.karpatinfo.net/hetilap/2020/info_202006.pdf (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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we would like the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia to be able to preserve their Hungarian mother tongue. We believe that both goals can be achieved simultaneously.”

Mr. Szijjártó stated that the Hungarian government is interested in rebuilding its good neighborly relations with Ukraine.

“We would like to build some pragmatic and practical success stories that would help rebuild the good relationship between the two countries. Therefore, we have scheduled a meeting of the intergovernmental cooperation committee in Budapest for March,” he added.

He reminded that the committee has not met for seven years now, and they agreed with their Ukrainian partners that holding such a meeting is urgent.

The head of the Hungarian diplomatic service expressed that Budapest would like to reach an agreement on the opening of at least one new border crossing point at this meeting. Agreements are also sought on the utilization of the infrastructure loan previously offered by Hungary, the development of agricultural and healthcare cooperation, and the mutual recognition of degrees issued by the two countries, he said.

In response to an MTI question, Dmytro Kuleba stated that the draft law on the protection of minority rights, which was promised by the government, is being prepared by the Ministry of Culture. Afterwards, the law will be subjected to a public debate, he added. However, Mr. Kuleba was unsure when the draft bill will be presented to parliament. On the other hand, Kyiv is making every effort to protect minority

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rights in accordance with its international obligations and there is no intent to delay the adoption of the law, he said.

According to an official press release on the Ministry of Education's website, the Ukrainian Minister of Education, Hanna Novosad, stated shortly after her meeting with the Hungarian minister that she does not consider any of the proposals presented by Péter Szijjártó regarding the resolution of Hungarian-language education in Ukraine feasible.

The Minister of Education rejected both the recognition of the Hungarian language as the native language of the Hungarian community and the increase of Ukrainian language classes in schools, while maintaining the same number of hours for other subjects. According to the Minister of Education, the recognition of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine as a native people is a political question that is currently not worth addressing, as Hungarians do not fall into this category legally. Furthermore, increasing the number of Ukrainian language classes without reducing the hours of subjects taught in Hungarian is not manageable.

Based on the release, *karp.at.in.ua*, quoted Ms. Novosad as saying that the main focus of the discussion with Hungarian foreign minister was to close the political debate on the language education in national minority schools and to shift attention towards working with teachers and methodological experts.

At the same time, Vadym Prystaiko, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, confirmed that Ukraine is ready for a constructive debate with Hungary regarding the education of the Hungarian national minority. According to the UNIAN news agency, Mr. Prystaiko stated on Twitter that several

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proposals from the Hungarian side have been received on this matter.

On Saturday, Péter Szijjártó responded to Ms. Novosad's rejection on his Facebook page. The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade wrote that the Ukrainian Minister of Education promised on Friday, in front of several witnesses including the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to meet with the leadership of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association soon to discuss the proposals. "I hope she will keep her promise. Accordingly, the recovery of good relations does not depend on us," emphasized the minister in his post.²²⁵

FEBRUARY 12, 2020 – HUNGARY ADVANCES PROPOSAL TO SOLVE THE ISSUE OF HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

Péter Szijjártó, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, informed his Ukrainian counterparts during his visit to Kyiv last week about the Hungarian proposal regarding the minority education in Ukrainian language, while preserving the mother tongue of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

The minister spoke about this during a press conference held jointly with Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Dmytro

225 *Kárpátalja*, February 11, 2020, available online at: <https://karpataljalap.net/2020/02/11/szijjarto-jo-viszony-tovabbra-sem-magyar-kormanyon-mulik> (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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Kuleba following their Friday meeting in Kyiv. “We understand Ukraine’s expectation that every citizen living within its territory should be able to speak Ukrainian; on the other hand, we would like Hungarians living in Transcarpathia to be able to preserve their Hungarian mother tongue. We believe that these two goals can be achieved simultaneously,” emphasized Szijjártó. Accordingly, he presented the Hungarian proposals on the matter to Hanna Novosad, the Ukrainian Minister of Education, with whom they agreed that she will meet with the leaders of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association in the near future. Mr. Szijjártó noted that the Hungarian government is interested in rebuilding its good neighborly relationship with Ukraine. “However, we would like to build some pragmatic and practical success stories that would help rebuild amicable relations between the two countries. Therefore, we have organized the meeting of the intergovernmental cooperation committee in Budapest in March,” he added. He reminded that the committee has not met for seven years now, and the Hungarian delegation agreed with the Ukrainian side on the urgency of resuming dialogue.

The leader of the Hungarian diplomatic service explained that Budapest would like to reach an agreement on the opening of at least one new border crossing during this meeting. The Hungarian government also aims to reach an agreement on the resolution of the Hungarian-language education situation in Ukraine.

During his visit to Kyiv last week, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade informed his Ukrainian counterparts about the Hungarian proposal regarding the possi-

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bility of preserving the Hungarian language as the mother tongue of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia, while also ensuring the education of the Ukrainian language for minority students. He also touched on the utilization of the offered infrastructure loan, the development of agricultural and healthcare cooperation, and the mutual recognition of degrees issued by both countries. “I agree with Dmytro Kuleba on wanting to turn Transcarpathia into a success story. Therefore, we are ready to continue our economic development program in Transcarpathia and provide support to educational, healthcare, and cultural institutions operating in the region,” he emphasized. “If this meeting goes well, it will open up opportunities before the spring summit between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary,” he stated.

Péter Szijjártó added that Hungary is ready to continue its humanitarian support in Ukraine. He expressed his joy that a direct air link between Budapest and Zaporizhzhia will be launched in the near future, making it possible to reach five Ukrainian cities directly from Hungarian capital.

In response to an MTI question, Dmytro Kuleba stated that the draft law on the protection of minority rights, which was promised by the government, is being prepared by the Ministry of Culture. The law will be up for public debate once the draft is complete, Mr. Kuleba stated, adding that he is unsure when the proposal will be presented to the parliament. However, he claimed that Kyiv is doing everything within its obligations under international agreements to protect minority rights and does not intend to postpone the adoption of the law. The Ukrainian Deputy Prime Min-

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ister expressed his gratitude to Hungary during the press conference for supporting Ukraine's territorial integration and for the assistance provided in the rehabilitation of Ukrainian children.

Additionally, Mr. Szijjártó had further discussions during the day with Vadym Prystaiko, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Oleksiy Honcharuk, the Prime Minister of Ukraine.²²⁶

MARCH 18, 2020 – CORONAVIRUS – KYIV: HUNGARY ALLOWS TRAPPED UKRAINIANS FROM CROATIA AND AUSTRIA TO PASS THROUGH

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, announced on Wednesday on Twitter that Ukraine has reached an agreement with Hungary to allow Ukrainians trapped in Croatia and Austria to pass through Hungarian territory. Ukrainian people have been stranded due to the closure of borders to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mr. Kuleba wrote that he reached this agreement with his Hungarian counterpart, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó, over the phone.

“We have agreed that Hungary will facilitate the transit for Ukrainian citizens who are stranded at the Austri-

226 https://www.karpatinfo.net/hetilap/2020/info_202007.pdf (retrieved July 1, 2023).

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an and Croatian borders with buses and cars. As of now, there are 310 individuals. We are waiting for them to return home,” the Ukrainian foreign minister wrote. According to the Ukrainian news agency UNIAN, Mr. Kuleba announced on Wednesday that about 38,000 Ukrainians are currently planning to return to Ukraine from abroad. The minister noted that this number is constantly changing, given some have already returned home, but new individuals who are expressing their intention to repatriate are continuously coming forward.²²⁷

JUNE 26, 2020 – ISTVÁN GREZSA HANDS OVER VACCINE SHIPMENT TO THE UKRAINIAN RED CROSS IN CSAP (CHOP), TRANSCARPATHIA

As part of the Hungarian government’s program, Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa handed over 22,500 doses of vaccine to the regional branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross in the Transcarpathian town of Csap (Chop) on Friday.

The event, held at the Csap (Chop) border station, on was attended by Oleksiy Petrov, the Governor of Transcarpathia, and József Buhajla, Hungarian Consul General in Ungvár (Uzhhorod).

Mr. István Grezsa, the Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the development of cooperation between

227 MTI news archive, March 18, 2020.

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Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, stated that as part of the five-year program run by the Hungarian government, a new shipment of five-component vaccines against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, influenza, and polio, worth HUF 141 million, arrived in the region on Friday. The ministerial commissioner recalled that over the past three years, a total of approximately 80,000 vials of vaccines have arrived in Transcarpathia as donations. Mr. Grezsa noted that at the beginning of the program, it was impossible to know that a measles epidemic would break out in the region. Similarly, no one could have anticipated the global spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is currently affecting Ukraine as well. He further emphasized that the coronavirus pandemic has been less severe in countries with high childhood vaccination rates, which confirms the effectiveness of the program.

István Grezsa noted that there are still two more years left from the program, and therefore requested the governor to assess the vaccine needs in Transcarpathia for this year and the following year, while stating that the Hungarian government is ready to satisfy those needs. Additionally, Mr. Grezsa expressed his satisfaction with the agreement between the countries' leaderships to improve bilateral relations, referring to the intergovernmental committee meeting in Kyiv on Thursday. He emphasized that this can greatly contribute to cooperation between Transcarpathia and Hungary.

In his speech during the handover, Mr. Petrov mentioned that once the vaccines have been received and authorized in Ukraine, will be distributed proportionally among the

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healthcare institutions of the region. He also added that based on parents' requests, children will receive these vaccinations free of charge. Referring to the committee meeting, the Governor of Transcarpathia pointed out that the development of the region was discussed during the meeting. Negotiations were also held regarding the opening of joint border crossings for transit traffic and the renovation of the Tisza bridge at the Záhony border station,

Prior to the current pharmaceutical shipment, the Hungarian government donated 5,000 doses of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine in early 2017 and 8,000 doses of measles vaccine in early 2018 to the Red Cross in Transcarpathia. In May 2018, 21,600 doses of Pentaxim vaccine and 15,000 doses of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine were handed over to the Red Cross. Most recently, in November 2018, Hungary supported its largest neighbor with 10,376 doses of a four-component combined vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and polio.²²⁸

JUNE 26, 2020. SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY IS READY TO HELP UKRAINE IN FLOOD DEFENSE

Soldiers of the Multinational Engineer Battalion Tisa are ready to travel to the flood-affected areas in Ukraine if requested by the Ukrainian authorities, Hungary's Minister of

228 MTI news archive, June 20, 2020,

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Foreign Affairs and Trade announced on his social media account on Friday afternoon.

In his post, Péter Szijjártó recalled that due to the weather conditions affecting certain parts of Ukraine, floods have occurred in several areas of the country in the recent days. To ensure the success of defense and damage control, Hungary has offered its assistance to its neighbor, he added. As he wrote, the Hungarian soldiers of the Multinational Engineer Battalion Tisa are specialized in carrying out tasks after natural disasters. They are ready to travel to the designated location if the Ukrainian authorities request their assistance. The purpose of the Battalion, composed of Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, and Ukrainian soldiers, is to assist the affected population and participate in the mitigation of damages in case of floods, as well as other natural disasters and ecological catastrophes occurring in the Tisza River basin.

According to the Thursday morning report of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, cited by the Ukrainian news agency UNIAN, heavy rainfall has caused floods in 285 settlements in the western part of the country. As a result of the sudden heavy rainfall, the water levels of several streams and rivers, including the Tisza, have significantly risen, causing water to overflow the banks in several places. The most severe situation has developed in Ivano-Frankivsk region, where three people have lost their lives due to the severe weather and 234 settlements have been flooded. Likewise, the regions of Lviv, Chernivtsi, Transcarpathia, and Ternopil have also been affected.

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In the five affected counties, the flooding has affected ten thousand houses, made 117 kilometers of roads impassable and destroyed 64 bridges. In addition, damages have occurred throughout 500 kilometers of road sections and affected 135 bridges.²²⁹

SEPTEMBER 4, 2020 – POTÁPI: HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTING THE REFURBISHMENT OF SIXTY-FOUR TRANSCARPATHIAN SCHOOLS

The government supports the renovation and improvement of 64 Hungarian schools in Transcarpathia, State Secretary for National Policy said on the M1 news channel on Friday morning.

Árpád János Potápi stated that the development is implemented in four stages. The first phase started in 2017, which primarily focused on secondary schools, is now being completed. Two institutions have already been inaugurated and the works will soon be completed in two more. The government is allocating over HUF 12 billion for the program, he pointed out. Mr. Potápi also mentioned that over 20,000 students are studying in Hungarian-language schools in Transcarpathia. The State Secretary also noted that the Transcarpathian Nursery School Development Program is ongoing and includes the construction of new institutions.²³⁰

229 MTI news archive, June 26, 2020.

230 MTI news archive, September 4, 2020.

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OCTOBER 20, 2020 – LEVENTE MAGYAR: THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING HUF 1.2 BILLION IN SUPPORT FOR ECOLOGICAL INVESTMENT IN BEREHOVE (BEREGSZÁSZ)

Levente Magyar, the Hungarian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Trade, announced that the country's government will contribute HUF 1.2 billion over the next two years to address ecological and urban issues related to the Vérke (Verke) river in Berehove. The announcement was made during a visit to Beregszász (Berehove) on Tuesday, at the invitation of mayor Zoltán Babják.

According to the State Secretary, the allocated amount will be used for the complete dredging of the urban section of the Vérke (Verke) river, as well as for sewage and sludge removal, and riverbank landscaping. Moreover, the construction of a dam and a canal outside the city will also take place. The canal will ensure that sewage sludge does not settle, but instead maintains a continuous flow of water supply and current in the river. The local waterworks will also receive support of approximately HUF 200 million from the Hungarian government, he added. The planning and preparations can already begin, and according to the plans, the works are expected to be completed by 2022. Mr. Magyar noted that this is the first phase of a long-term project aiming to clear the entire length of the river, including a joint investment to prevent wastewater from entering the river. Mr. Magyar highlighted that this development is a significant step for the city of Beregszász (Berehove) to regain its “former glory” and to greatly improve the quality of life in the Transcarpathian town.²³¹

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JANUARY 22, 2021 – CORONAVIRUS – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE: HUNGARY DONATES VENTILATORS TO UKRAINE

The Hungarian government is providing fifty ventilators to assist Ukraine in its efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade told MTI on Friday. According to the statement, the ministry will deliver the life-saving medical equipment to Ungvár (Uzhhorod) with the help of the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity. From there, they will be distributed to forty-six healthcare institutions in nine western and eastern Ukrainian counties. The shipment departed on Friday in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the charity, the ministry stated.²³²

JANUARY 26, 2021 – CORONAVIRUS – VENTILATORS DONATED BY THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT TO UKRAINE ARRIVE IN BEREGSZÁSZ (BEREHOVE)

The shipment of 50 ventilators, sent from Budapest with the involvement of the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity, arrived in Beregszász (Berehove) on Tuesday. With this ship-

231 MTI news archive, October 20, 2020.

232 MTI news archive, January 22, 2021.

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ment, the Hungarian government is supporting Ukraine in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the official handover of the shipment, László Lehel, the chairman and CEO of the charity, reminded that they have already provided 50 ventilators to Transcarpathian hospitals treating COVID-19 patients in the fall of 2020. With the current shipment, the Hungarian government is extending its support to nine regions of Ukraine, he said.

Anikó Lévai, the Goodwill Ambassador of the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity, emphasized that her organization was involved not only in delivering the machines but also in organizing the installation of life-saving equipment.

Anatoliy Poloskov, the recently appointed governor of Transcarpathia, expressed his gratitude on behalf of the leaders of the supported Ukrainian regions for the assistance provided. “The strength of our relationship has stood the test of time, and our good relations are extremely beneficial for both Ukraine and Hungary,” the governor highlighted.²³³

JANUARY 28, 2021 – HUNGARY PROVIDES RABIES VACCINATIONS TO THE UKRAINIAN RED CROSS

On Thursday, Ministerial Commissioner István Grezsa, handed over two thousand doses of rabies vaccines to the local branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross in the Transcar-

233 MTI news archive, January 26, 2021.

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pathian region on behalf of the Hungarian government. The handover took place at the Hungarian-Ukrainian border crossing at Záhony.

The Hungarian Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the development of cooperation between Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Transcarpathia, as well as for coordinating the nursery development program in the Carpathian Basin, made a statement at the event held at the Tisza Bridge, near the border between the two countries. According to Mr. Grezsa, Hungary is fulfilling the request of Transcarpathian leaders with the humanitarian vaccine shipment, worth nearly HUF 23 million.

“Five years ago, we received a call for help from Transcarpathia, as there were not enough age-appropriate vaccinations for children,” he said, emphasizing that the Hungarian government program launched in 2017 to address this issue not only provided the missing vaccines to Transcarpathia but also contributed to reducing the significant disparities in child immunization rates between Hungary and Ukraine. Furthermore, it also decreased vaccine hesitancy among parents in Ukraine.

Mr. Grezsa recalled that Hungary has previously supported Ukraine during the measles outbreak in Ukraine, in the procurement of equipment for dialysis treatments, as well as in acquiring antivenom serum for snakebites. In addition to Thursday’s shipment, the Hungarian government has already received a request from the leadership of Transcarpathia for the year 2021, which is of a significantly higher volume compared to the current shipment. The ministerial commissioner emphasized that “Hungary, as it has always

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done, will keep its word and provide the requested aid shipment”. Referring to the border line running through the middle of the bridge, Mr. Grezsa commented that there have been many reports in the Ukrainian press about Hungary crossing the “red line”. However, he stated that being personally prohibited from entering Ukraine, it will not happen this time.

Mr. Grezsa also pointed out that he has been in working relationship with three governors of Transcarpathia over the past five years, but this is the first time that he is unable to personally deliver the donation requested by the county leadership. “This situation perfectly demonstrates the absurdity that characterizes the relationship between Hungary and Ukraine today,” he added. The minister emphasized that if we want to improve the relationship, we need to move beyond this absurdity, as trust is essential for cooperation based on mutual interests. Mr. Grezsa stated that “the leadership of Transcarpathia can count on Hungary as a predictable and reliable partner, as it has been in the past, present, and will be in the future.”²³⁴

FEBRUARY 8, 2021 – STAGE OF THE UKRAINIAN DRAMA THEATER IN TRANSCARPATHIA TO BE RENOVATED WITH SUPPORT FROM HUNGARY

As part of a Hungarian government program entitled “Kárpátaljai KultúrKaraván,” the entire stage technology of

234 MTI news archive, January 28, 2021.

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the Ukrainian Drama Theater of Transcarpathia is set to be renovated.

The refurbishment will last approximately three and a half months, costing HUF 160 million. As part of the development, the stage planks and the revolving stage mechanism will be replaced and modern sound and lighting equipment will be installed in the largest theater of Transcarpathia, which has a seating capacity of 800. During the press conference held to mark the commencement of the theater's modernization, József Buhajla, the Hungarian Consul General in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), referred to the unusual circumstance that István Grezsa, the Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the implementation of the program, was unable to attend the event due to being prohibited from entering Ukraine.

The diplomat recalled that in the recent period, several cultural developments have been implemented in Transcarpathia with the participation of the State Secretariat for National Policy. This includes developments such as the renovation of cultural centers in Salán (Shalanki) and Tiszapéterfalva (Pyiterfolvo), the refurbishment of the Hungarian Drama Theater in Beregszász (Berehove), and the acquisition of a modern bus for the theater company. The theater in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) is the only theater in Transcarpathia equipped with a revolving stage. A contract specifies the number of cultural events the Hungarian community can hold at the theater annually following the renovation, Mr. Buhajla pointed out.²³⁵

235 MTI news archive, February 8, 2021.

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JULY 7, 2021 – SZIJJÁRTÓ: BUDAPEST HELPS UKRAINE, BUT KYIV MUST RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY

Hungary will continue to support Ukraine in the future, but Budapest also considers it crucial that Kyiv respects the rights of the Hungarian minority, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said in Vilnius on Wednesday.

Hungary's interest lies in a strong and prosperous Ukraine, but it is essential that the Ukrainian government ensures the rights previously provided to the Hungarian minority living in its territory, including the use of mother tongue, Mr. Szijjártó said at a conference on Ukraine held in the Lithuanian capital. "We emphasize that we are not asking for anything extraordinary in this regard; we simply expect the Ukrainian government to restore the rights previously guaranteed to the Hungarian minority, which were taken away from them by the Ukrainian Law on National Minorities," the minister stated. Mr. Szijjártó also referred to the use of the mother tongue in administration, education, media, and the cultural sphere while drawing attention to a website that lists the "enemies of Ukraine," including several representatives of the Hungarian minority and the Hungarian state by name. The minister requested the participants of the conference to do everything possible to have the website shut down.

Regarding the coronavirus pandemic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade mentioned that Budapest will continue the vaccination campaign in the Transcarpathian region regardless of nationality. He also stated that after the pandemic, Hungary will once again provide holiday op-

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portunities for Ukrainian children whose parents have been affected by the conflicts in the eastern part of the country. Furthermore, he reminded that among other things, Budapest provided ventilators to assist Ukraine in its fight against the pandemic; additionally, Hungary remains ready to supply gas to the country that is currently facing shortages.

In his speech, Péter Szijjártó recalled that Hungary was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Ukraine after the country declared its independence in 1991. Today, Hungary is Ukraine's fourth most significant trading partner among the member states of the European Union. He highlighted that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are important to Hungary; moreover, Budapest has always advocated for closer cooperation between Kyiv and the European Union, including visa facilitation for Ukrainian citizens, he added. After the conference, Péter Szijjártó is expected to meet with his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba.²³⁶

JULY 22, 2021 – SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY, HOLDING THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU, IS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS IN THE DONBAS REGION

Hungary, holding the rotating presidency of the Council of Europe, is doing everything possible to ensure that the

236 MTI news archive, July 7, 2021.

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armed conflict in the Donbas region is peacefully resolved as soon as possible, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó emphasized during a visit to Stanytsia Luhanska along the eastern Ukrainian front. The minister and his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba, made a joint visit to the front on Thursday.

“I find it extremely sad that there are still armed conflicts in Europe in the 21st century. The crossing point at Stanytsia Luhanska is certainly among the saddest and most disheartening places in Europe. As the current president of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, we are doing everything in our power to assist in the peaceful and swift resolution of this conflict. We also strive to contribute, within our means, to the implementation of the Minsk agreements,” the head of the Hungarian diplomatic service stressed. He noted that until the conflict is resolved, Hungary aims to provide humanitarian assistance to the region. He stated that the clinic in Stanytsia Luhanska has been renovated using Hungarian funds and medical equipment has also been donated to the institution. Mr. Szijjártó pointed out that the clinic provides medical care for approximately 10,000 residents in the region and reminded that there are twenty-one Hungarian members in the Ukrainian observation mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. “Therefore, we maintain our participation and contribution, and we will also contribute €140,000 to the action program of the Council of Europe in Ukraine,” Mr. Szijjártó pointed out. The minister expressed his hope that the war situation, which is causing despair in people’s lives, will be resolved as soon as possible. Mr. Kuleba point-

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ed out that both himself and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky encourage that high-level guests visiting Ukraine should witness firsthand the efforts made by the Ukrainian leadership to defend the region, facilitate reconstruction, and support the local population. “Hungary supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine and has a significant presence in the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Ukraine is grateful for this support,” Mr. Kuleba said, emphasizing that thanks to visits like this, Kyiv is able to keep the issue of the Donbas region and the temporarily occupied territories of Crimea high on the agenda. “This also helps us mobilize international public opinion to support the liberation of the occupied territories and the improve living conditions for residents on both sides of the front line,” the Ukrainian Foreign Minister added.²³⁷

237 MTI news archive, July 22, 2021.

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