

Erzsébet Molnár D. – Natália Váradi – Karolina Darcsi –  
Ildikó Orosz – István Csernicsekó

**STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL**  
**THE TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIANS**  
**(1944–2022)**



Méry Ratio Publishing  
Budapest

Authors:

*Erzsébet Molnár D. – Natália Váradi – Karolina Darcsi –  
Ildikó Orosz – István Csernicskó*

Reviewed by:

*László Brenzovics*

Edited by:

*Andrea Bocskor, István Csernicskó, Erzsébet Molnár D.*

Translator:

*Boróka Prohászka Rád*

Proofreading by:

*Enikő Tankó*

Design and pagination:

*Melinda Orbán*

Cover:

*László Vezsdel*

Cover image © László Vezsdel

Back image © László Bocskor

Coordinated by: Andrea Bocskor and Zsolt Szilágyi

The book was published thanks to the kind support of the Ministry of Justice of Hungary  
(Project No. IX-SZ/728/2/2021)

Publisher: © Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2022  
Londýnská 43, 120 00 Prague, Czech Republic

The writings reflect the authors' own opinions.

The book can be distributed only free of charge.

All rights reserved.

Publishing and printing:

Méry Ratio

ISBN 978-80-907355-9-0

© Authors, 2022

© Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2022

## CONTENTS

FOREWORD ( <i>Andrea Bocskor</i> ).....	9
---	---

VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS COMMITTED BY THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN TRANSCARPATHIA (1944–1953) ( <i>Erzsébet Molnár D.</i> ).....	15
--	----

1. Occupation and annexation. Mass deportation of Transcarpathian Hungarians .....	15
2. Social and individual deprivation of rights .....	28
2.1. Political disenfranchisement of society.....	29
2.2. Violations of freedom of the press.....	31
2.3. Violation of private property and transformation of ownership .....	32
2.4. Violations of religious freedom .....	35
3. Communist terror, criminal procedure law violations, show trials.....	40
4. Summary.....	45

STRUGGLES OF THE TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIANS IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1953 AND 1989 ( <i>Natália Váradi</i> ).....	47
---	----

1. Society, everyday life .....	47
2. Population. Ethnic changes .....	50
3. Administration.....	52
4. Economic situation.....	53
5. The role of ideological work.....	59
6. The situation of churches.....	61
7. Cross-border relations. Tourism .....	64
8. Transcarpathia at the time of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.....	65
9. Transcarpathia during the Prague Spring .....	75
10. Efforts for legal equality of Transcarpathian Hungarians.....	76

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIANS IN INDEPENDENT UKRAINE (1991–2022) ( <i>Karolina Darcsi</i> ) .....	99
1. The independence of Ukraine 1990–1991.....	99
2. Autonomy-aspirations 1990–1991.....	100
3. Legislation affecting Ukrainian minorities in the 1990s.....	103
4. Autonomy-aspirations 1992–1993.....	107
5. The period of propagating cultural autonomy and the new Ukrainian Constitution .....	109
6. The possibilities of representing minority interests from the end of the 90s to the Orange Revolution 1997–2003.....	111
7. From the Orange Revolution to the Revolution of Dignity 2004–2014.....	114
8. Restrictions of rights and war 2014–2022 .....	123
9. Restriction of minority rights after 2014.....	129

ABOUT HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN TRANSCARPATHIA (1946–2022) ( <i>Ildikó Orosz</i> ).....	143
1. Hungarian-language education between 1945 and 1966.....	144
2. Hungarian-language education in the 1970s and 1980s.....	146
3. Mother tongue education in the first half of the 1990s (1991–1996).....	148
4. Minority education in the decades following the adoption of the new Ukrainian Constitution (1996–2017) .....	149
5. Framework Law on Education .....	167
6. Programs aimed at supporting Transcarpathian education.....	172

LINGUISTIC (HUMAN) RIGHTS AND THEIR VIOLATIONS IN TRANSCARPATHIA (1944–2022) ( <i>István Cserniczkó</i> ) .....	179
1. What are linguistic rights?.....	179
2. Linguistic rights in Transcarpathia in the Soviet-Ukraine period....	185
3. Linguistic (human) rights violations against the Hungarians in Transcarpathia in the time of the Soviet Union.....	189
4. Linguistic Rights in Independent Ukraine .....	195
5. Continuous restrictions of linguistic rights in Ukraine.....	197
5.1. Mother-tongue-medium education for minorities.....	197

5.2. The justice system.....	202
5.3. Language use in public administration and in the operation of local authorities .....	203
5.4. The press.....	206
5.5. Geographical names.....	207
5.6. Participation in public affairs (language examination) .....	209
6. Linguistic rights and security policy .....	211
7. Conclusions.....	218

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE FOR LEARNING ABOUT THE PAST AND PRESENT OF TRANSCARPATHIA .....	221
---	-----

CHRONOLOGY.....	229
-----------------	-----

NOTES ON AUTHORS.....	237
-----------------------	-----

## ABOUT HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN TRANSCARPATHIA (1946–2022)

Every single segment of ethnic minority life is influenced by politics. The fact itself that someone or some group becomes an ethnic minority is the consequence of some kind of political event. One can become the member of an ethnic minority group in three different ways:

1. As a result of political and/or economic events, the individual emigrates, thus he/she chooses another country by his/her own decision, where he/she is transferred from his/her most natural linguistic-cultural environment and living space to a foreign language environment and foreign living space. These people choose a minority status voluntarily, they can prepare for it spiritually, and taking into account their mentality, their possibilities, they can more or less choose a country that best satisfies their visions.
2. As a result of political events, some are forced to flee from their own natural environment. Either because their lives are endangered in their original place of residence or because they do not want to be part of the acute political situation (such as Hungarians fleeing reprisals to the West to escape reprisals after the fall of the 1956 Revolution, or Ukrainians fleeing war in 2022). Refugees usually cannot decide which country to go to in order to survive, they go where they are accepted. Since the possibility of returning is uncertain for them, due to the feeling of comfort, they usually do everything so that their environment does not notice their difference in the shortest possible time, that is, to dissolve into the majority population as soon as possible.
3. Communities who, from one day to the other, become minorities in their own homeland, where earlier they had all the rights of the majority, have no options. This latter is valid for the Hungarian minorities living in the Carpathian basin who were overpassed by borders and, from one day to the next, they became citizens of another country, of another power.

This is especially true for the Transcarpathian Hungarian community over whom borders were redrawn several times in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, thus, they became citizens of several countries against their own

will. Until 1920, the territory they populate was part of Hungary, then, after the First World War, it was annexed to Czechoslovakia. In 1938–1939, together with the entire region, their homeland became, again, part of Hungary; then, in 1944, part of the Soviet Union, and later, in 1991, part of Ukraine.

Due to such drastic “changes of country”, the legal and linguistic environment, the educational system and its content have changed overnight for the people living there. Their social status has changed as well: they have become subordinated citizens, at best co-inhabitants.

The gravest effect of such changes are felt by the generation right before graduating high school because they are not allowed to take their final exams in their own mother tongue and neither can they continue their studies in their mother tongue. In Transcarpathia, the effects of “changes of country” were felt by all generations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which particularly affected the education and training of all generations.

### **1. Hungarian-language education between 1945 and 1966**

After the entry of Soviet troops in the autumn of 1944, the functioning of the schools was only symbolic. The management of schools was taken over by the Carpathian-Ukrainian National Council which ordered the destruction of books in foreign languages, i.e. mainly Hungarian and German ones, in schools. On 29<sup>th</sup> April 1945, the People’s Council of Transcarpathian Ukraine passed a decision on the nationalization of schools. This also meant that the properties of the Hungarian-language denominational schools were expropriated by the state, and they came under state control.

In 1946, the educational structure, which matched the European system, was transformed into a ten-grade system based on the Soviet model: 4 years elementary school + 3 years general school + 3 years high school. In the raions where there was a larger Hungarian population (Beregszász (Berehove), Ungvár (Uzhhorod), Munkács (Mukachevo), Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv)), elementary and general school education took place in Hungarian, although there were no Hungarian-language school books because they were collected for ideological reasons. A part of the children had to repeat a year of study because their previous year of study was not recognized. For example, those in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade who, in conformity with Hungarian laws, started school at the age of 6, became 1<sup>st</sup> graders again because, in the Soviet system, the school enrollment age was 7 years. In districts where Hungarians lived in diaspora, no institutional Hungarian-language education or Hungarian-language teaching took place, not even in towns and villages with a significant Hungarian population. There was no mother tongue education in the Hungarian speaking, Greek Catholic villages of the

Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv) raion either because the population was considered to be Ukrainian on the basis of their religion. In the academic year 1945–46, 82 Hungarian-language elementary schools and 17 seven-grade schools operated in the area. In the academic year 1950–51, there were 55 Hungarian-language elementary schools and 46 general schools. From 1945, in schools, the Ukrainian and Russian languages were also taught, of course, only if teachers spoke either of these. From 1<sup>st</sup> December 1947, the teaching of the Russian language became compulsory in Hungarian and other ethnic schools.

There were no Hungarian-language high schools for a long time. The first Hungarian-language high schools were opened only after Stalin's death in 1953, first in four villages, and, then, from the next academic year, in towns as well. Parallel to the introduction of Hungarian-language high school education, in the Hungarian schools there opened Russian- or Ukrainian-language classes as well, for Hungarian children, and every method was used to force parents to enroll their children in Russian-language classes. In the academic year 1966–67, already a quarter of Hungarian-language schools operated with Russian- or Ukrainian-language classes as well.

In 1958, general schools started operating with eight grades: 4 years elementary + 4 years general education. High schools operated with three grades until 1966, then they went on with two grades. Thus, the ten years of public education were divided as follows: 4 years elementary + 4 years general + 2 years high school education.

The first official state curricula for Hungarian-language and literature were drafted in 1951 and 1952. Schoolbooks were written in the Ungvár (Uzhhorod) department of the "Soviet School" Textbook Publishing House, founded in 1946, and these schoolbooks (except those of Hungarian language and literature) were the mirror translations of the Russian versions. The first Hungarian alphabet book was written by István Kutlán and published in 1947, followed, in 1965, by the book entitled *Betűország* [The Country of Letters], compiled by Géza Ónody. Hungarian language and literature textbooks were also written by local authors.

Teacher training took place in the training school that followed the first seven, then eight grade general school. For many years, this teacher training school was the only option for further studying in the mother tongue. The Hungarian class of the teacher training school was first started in Huszt (Khust) in 1947, but there was no Hungarian-language school there, so, in 1950, the Hungarian group was transferred to the teachers' training school in Munkács (Mukachevo). Even in the teachers' training school, only a couple of subjects were taught in Hungarian, the rest in Russian.



In 1951, a college of pedagogy was established in Ungvár (Uzhhorod) to compensate for the shortage of teachers. In the academic year 1953–54, a Hungarian language and literature specialization started as well, but this only lasted until the next year. The students were transferred to the Ungvár State University, those who specialized in Hungarian had to switch to Russian, and they could only study Hungarian as an optional subject for one or two years more. Their diploma stated that they were teachers of Russian language and literature for Hungarian schools.

There was no Hungarian-language vocational training, no vocational institution provided Hungarian-language study programs.

At the Ungvár State University, founded in 1946, there was no Hungarian language teaching for years. The teaching staff of the university was made up of teachers sent to the region from various parts of the Soviet Union, who were housed in service apartments expropriated from those who had fled the Soviets, or from those who were considered to be against the system, or from the deported. After almost two decades, only in 1963 was there a Hungarian specialization set up, while the Department of Hungarian Philology became independent in 1965. Those who were studying Hungarian could only study the Hungarian philology subjects in Hungarian, general philology and social sciences subjects were taught in Russian, and some other subjects in Ukrainian (all this in a situation in which Ukrainian was not taught in Hungarian language schools). Those enrolled to other specializations did not study any subject in Hungarian, even though the number of Hungarian students studying there in some specializations would have allowed the formation of Hungarian groups.

## **2. Hungarian-language education in the 1970s and 1980s**

After the opening of the Hungarian Department at the university, more and more graduates from Hungarian schools applied to the Ungvár State University, many were also admitted to other majors, despite the fact that they started the entrance exams with a significant disadvantage. Graduates of Russian- and Ukrainian-language schools could take all exams in their mother tongue, and in the admission procedure, they also wrote the mandatory essay in and from the language and literature in which they had studied. Graduates of Hungarian schools had to take the entrance exams in Russian, and write their essays in Russian. In order to ensure equal opportunities for high school graduates of Hungarian schools, Transcarpathian physics teacher András Polczer wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education in Moscow. He requested that, at least at the Ungvár State University, applicants would be allowed to take

their entrance exams in the subjects of their specialization in Hungarian. In the following year, persons who spoke Hungarian were also appointed to the admissions committees in some departments of the Ungvár State University, thus candidates could take their oral examinations in Hungarian. Encouraged by this, to the initiative of Sándor Fodó, teacher at the Hungarian Department of the University, a group of Transcarpathian Hungarian intellectuals gathered in András Polczer's apartment in 1972, and they drafted a Petition addressed to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, requesting the provision of minority rights, referring to the nationality policy built on Leninist principles. The Petition was signed by more than 1000 people from almost all Transcarpathian settlements populated by Hungarians. Transcarpathian Hungarian intellectuals sent the document of Moscow, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. However, both the authors of the Petition and the university students who participated in gathering the signatures were later punished in different ways. Fodó was fired from his job, school teachers were reprimanded, the secret service monitored them, they were not allowed to go abroad, not even to visit family. Still, as a result of their actions, for years it was allowed for graduates of Hungarian language high schools to take their entrance exams and write their essays in Hungarian-language to all specializations of the Ungvár State University. This admission procedure ensured equal opportunities at the time of admission, and thanks to this, a new and young Hungarian intelligentsia was formed in Transcarpathia.

Parallel to this, a Russification wave also started in the schools in the entire country. Arguing that the Russian language was "the language of connection between nations", it was demanded that everybody spoke it well. Thus, they wanted schools teaching in different ethnic languages to shift to Russian language education. Besides classes studying in Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romanian, etc., Russian language classes were also opened for minority children. Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romanian, etc. children (who spoke their mother tongues at home and in their environment) studied every subject in Russian, except their mother tongues and literatures. As a result, the quality of education deteriorated because the children did not understand what they were learning, they only memorized the material. By the time they learnt the language, they were not able to follow the specialized subjects, especially in the field of natural sciences. So, instead of increasing the effectiveness of Russian language education, some representatives of national minorities were deprived of the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue.

The teachers of ethnic schools, recognizing the bad practice resulting in the deterioration of the quality of education, took action against the

artificial Russification on professional forums. Ensuring mother-tongue education, as a legal and professional-methodological issue concerning minorities, became one of the main topics during the years of glasnost announced by Gorbachev in 1985. There was a consensus among teachers of the Ukrainian, Romanian, and Hungarian minority education network about ensuring the possibility of mother tongue education in order to improve the quality of education. The representatives of national minorities agreed that education in the mother tongue was the most effective. This thematized the glasnost era, and, thus, the issue of mother tongue education of minorities became one of the determining factors and driving forces behind the disintegration of the Soviet system.

Hungarian native speakers could study only in Ukrainian and Russian in all vocational high schools and vocational training schools in Transcarpathia.

In village kindergartens, the educators spoke to children in Hungarian, but this did not mean education in the mother tongue given that until 1988 there was no curriculum issued for Hungarian kindergartens. In the cities, there was no Hungarian language kindergarten until 1989, not even in Beregszász (Berehove) where the majority of the inhabitants were Hungarian.

After 1945, thus, in Transcarpathia there was no Hungarian-language institutional network that would have provided mother tongue education from kindergarten to university level.

### **3. Mother tongue education in the first half of the 1990s (1991–1996)**

In 1991, when Ukraine seceded from the Soviet Union, Transcarpathian Hungarians experienced yet another “change of countries” without having left the land of their ancestors. This political change resulted in the change of language of education and public life yet again: instead of Russian, Ukrainian became the language of public life and of getting ahead. However, during the existence of the Soviet Union, the new state language was not taught in Hungarian-language schools, only Russian.

In order for minorities to vote for independence, in accordance with the interests of Ukrainian politicians, before the referendum on independence, held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1991, minorities were promised the preservation and expansion of the minority rights acquired in the Soviet system. The Supreme Council of the Ukrainian USSR adopted a referendum in this sense which contributed to the fact that the absolute majority of Transcarpathian Hungarians voted for an independent Ukraine at the independence referendum in Transcarpathia. Thus, a kind of social contract was created

between Ukrainian minorities, such as Transcarpathian Hungarians, and the new Ukrainian state, in which the Ukrainian state guaranteed the continued provision of the opportunity for mother tongue education gained under the Soviet system.

In the first years of independence, education policy was developed accordingly, and the first laws gave space for minorities to develop their institutional network, until the adoption of the new Constitution in 1996.

In 1991, the Subcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Union (SHTU), the social and interest representation organization of Hungarian public education workers in the region, was established. To the initiative and active participation of the Hungarian community, Hungarian schools and kindergartens were opened in many settlements. In the settlements where during the Soviet era there was no institutional Hungarian-language education, the SHTU organized Sunday schools. The historical churches founded denominational high schools. To the initiative of the Hungarian community, Hungarian language groups were organized in the vocational training school in Beregszász (Berehove), in the healthcare technical school and in the agricultural technical school in Munkács (Mukachevo). In Ungvár (Uzhhorod), a Hungarian group started in the vocational school of popular education. In 1993, to the initiative of the political representational body, the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia and of the SHTU, a decision was made with reference to the creation of a Hungarian-language college, and they set up the Foundation for the Transcarpathian Hungarian College. The Transcarpathian Reformed Church and the Beregszász (Berehove) City Council joined the initiative. The foundation was registered in 1994 and, by 1996, they managed to have the Kyiv authorities issue the license for operation for the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teacher Training College.

#### **4. Minority education in the decades following the adoption of the new Ukrainian Constitution (1996–2017)**

After the implementation of the new Constitution,<sup>1</sup> adopted in 1996, an anti-minority process gained momentum in Ukraine. Although minority rights have well-defined safeguards in the Constitution, the Constitution defines Ukraine as a monolithic nation-state, it does not take into account that a

---

<sup>1</sup> The 1996 Constitution of Ukraine: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80?fbclid=IwA R0M9CKia-H0Z701ctSUcp4V0OHF5tuzk4eBJ OZqSMT32jgnPaIO4Pp2rU0>. Last accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

significant proportion of the population of the state is not Ukrainian, and there is almost no mention of them, as state-forming national communities.

The first anti-minority documents drafted in connection with the enforcement of the homogeneous nation-state were concepts regulating the education of minorities, compiled by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in 1997–1998. The drafts contradicted the passages of the Constitution concerning minorities, all applicable laws related to the rights, education, and use of the mother tongue of minorities. They wanted to implement the nation state with one-time and immediate measures, and proposed the transitive education model for national minorities. The essence of this transitive education model was to provide for minorities elementary education in the mother tongue, and, then, all subjects were to be taught in the state language (i.e. Ukrainian). Laws were not amended on the basis of these drafts, but their elements were continuously introduced through ministerial decrees. First, the name of the institution in the language of the nationality was deleted from the school seals, and, then, ethnic schools were obliged to keep school documents exclusively in Ukrainian (instead of the previous bilingual practice).

Analyzing the laws defining Ukraine's educational policy adopted after the adoption of the new Constitution, we can state that, on the one hand, they declared their accession to the European education area, and on the other hand, they used education as a means of building the Ukrainian nation-state. The Ukrainian language and culture were made compulsory at all levels of education for all citizens by means of state power. According to the Soviet model, step by step, the authorities turned the educational system into a means for their own political purposes, and following the Russification model, they Ukrainized it. The independent Ukraine, thus, applied the tools of Soviet Russification in relation with the minorities living on its territory.

The first Law on Education, adopted in 1991, was still permissive, and gave civil organizations the opportunity to establish educational institutions, although it did not provide any financial support in this sense, despite the fact that the parents of children attending these institutions were Ukrainian tax-paying citizens, and thus, funds should have been provided for their education from the taxes paid, even if they wanted to study in their mother tongue, according to their own needs.<sup>2</sup> Transcarpathian Hungarians took advantage of

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ukraine's 1991 Law on Education (Закон України "Про освіту", 1991) [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1060-12?fbclid=IwAR3nbJQX-Py4eJofbdVfvX\\_dJMAv9QIpG-M81rwCR8yIRu37wQoqUWF7y7CM](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1060-12?fbclid=IwAR3nbJQX-Py4eJofbdVfvX_dJMAv9QIpG-M81rwCR8yIRu37wQoqUWF7y7CM). Last accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

the opportunities, despite the fact that the state did not support them financially, and founded denominational kindergartens, high schools and also a college.

The Orange Revolution of 2004–2005 brought the strengthening of Ukrainian nationalism. In 2005, Ukraine joined the Bologna process that fastened several educational policy processes. Systemic problems and issues came to the surface, such as the issue of corruption in higher education. In order to eliminate corruption – referring to the Bologna process – in 2006, it was decided in Kyiv to introduce a uniform admission system. A network of independent examination centers was created, the task of which would have been to ensure equal opportunities during admissions, something that is, in fact, in line with the spirit of the Bologna process. In case of a positive state attitude, this system could have ensured real equality of opportunities for minorities as well, if they had kept the previous system of the admission system, where students took exams in the language and from the language they had studied in secondary schools: the Ukrainians in and from Ukrainian, the Russians in and from Russian, the Romanians in and from Romanian, the Hungarians in and from Hungarians, etc. However, the reform, referring to the principle of uniform access, eliminated this very thing. The centralized exam excluded the mother tongues of the minorities from the admission system, but made the advanced level Ukrainian exam mandatory for everyone, for all specializations, thereby significantly reducing the chances of minorities to continue their education. In the Ukrainian exam, everyone had to pass the same test that was expected of Ukrainian native speakers. If the applicant's test in Ukrainian did not reach the minimum score valid for the given year, he/she could not submit his/her application for any specialization. This also applied to private higher education institutions, despite the fact that they did not receive any Ukrainian state budget support.

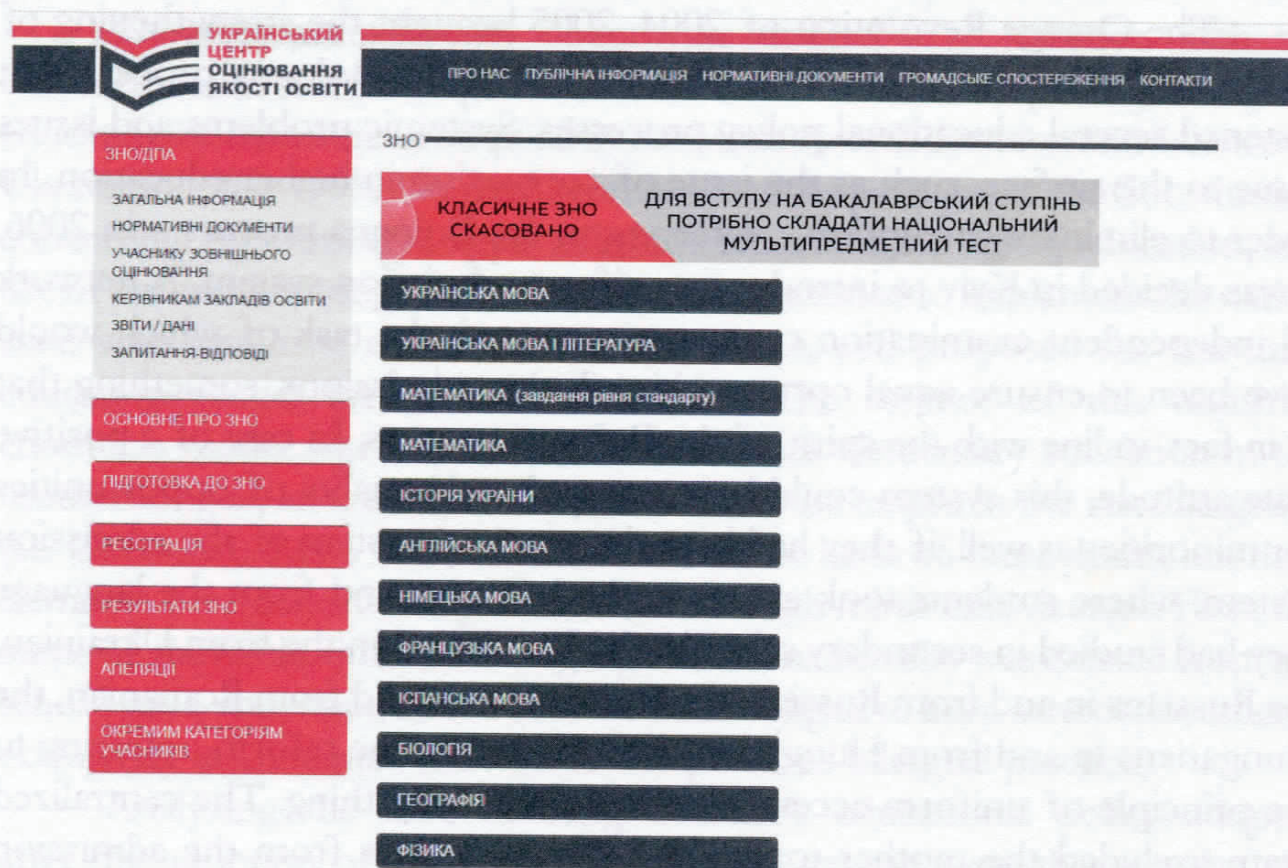
The system was introduced by Socialist Party Minister of Education and Science Stanislav Nikolayenko in 2007.<sup>3</sup> According to the original decree, all entrance exams could only be taken in Ukrainian, even by graduates of ethnic schools, who did not study subjects in Ukrainian. For all majors, including, for example, Hungarian language and literature, it made the native language level C1 exam in Ukrainian mandatory, while graduates of ethnic schools were not allowed to take a graduation exam in their mother tongue.

---

<sup>3</sup> Decree No. 607 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (Міністерство освіти і науки України, Наказ 13.07.2007 N607.) [https://zakononline.com.ua/documents/show/32459\\_\\_\\_32459](https://zakononline.com.ua/documents/show/32459___32459). Last accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

Figure 1.

*The website of the Ukrainian external independent evaluation*



After the autumn 2007 elections, the new right-wing education minister, Ivan Vakarczuk, partially amended the given decree. The amended decree allowed graduates of ethnic schools to use a glossary of technical language in their exams.<sup>4</sup> In response to the protests of Ukrainian minorities and foreign political pressure generated by them, the minister allowed graduates of ethnic schools to take exams in specialized subjects in the language of education for the years 2008–2009, thus, in the languages in which they studied the given subjects until the time of graduation.<sup>5</sup> Still, it kept the mandatory Ukrainian exam “in order to ensure equal conditions”. In countless cases, the stakeholders and minority interest protection organizations turned to the Minister of Education, the President of the State,

<sup>4</sup> Decree No. 1171 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 25<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (Міністерство освіти і науки України, Наказ 25.12.2007. N117.) [https://zakononline.com.ua/documents/show/292223\\_\\_\\_292288](https://zakononline.com.ua/documents/show/292223___292288). Last accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Decree No. 33 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 24<sup>th</sup> January 2008 (Міністерство освіти і науки України, Наказ 24.01.2008 N33.) <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0073-08/ed20101007/conv>. Last accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

and the Minority Ombudsman for the amendment of the discriminatory admission procedure, and argued as follows:<sup>6</sup>

- For students graduating in a minority language, the same requirement with reference to Ukrainian was valid as for native speakers of Ukrainian, who graduated from a Ukrainian school, and those who wanted to enroll in a Ukrainian specialization, even though it was not their native language.
- Minorities did not study Ukrainian according to the same curriculum and not in the same number of hours as Ukrainian native speakers.
- The state did not provide the material conditions for teaching the state language, because no Ukrainian–Hungarian or Hungarian–Ukrainian dictionary had been published; the curricula and the textbooks did not take into account the specificities of minority languages, they were not developed according to the principles of second language acquisition.
- Personal conditions for teaching the Ukrainian language were incomplete. Ukrainian language and literature teachers were not trained for ethnic schools, so Ukrainian was taught by those who spoke the language at some level.
- Those who specialized in Ukrainian language and literature were not trained to teach Ukrainian to non-natives but to convey the high Ukrainian linguistic and literary culture to Ukrainian native speakers; therefore, most of them did not cope with the professional challenges occurring in minority schools.

---

<sup>6</sup> CSERNICKÓ, István, Viktória FERENC: Education as an ideal means of achieving a nation state in Ukraine. In: *Concepts & Consequences of Multilingualism in Europe*. Ed. Róka, Jolán. Budapest: Budapest College of Communication and Business, 2010. 329–349.; CSERNICKÓ, István: The linguistic aspects of the Ukrainian educational policy. *ESUKA – JEFUL* 2011/2–1: 75–91.; CSERNICKÓ, István: Teaching Ukrainian as a State Language in Transcarpathia: situation, problems and tasks. In: *Language learning and teaching: State language teaching for minorities*. Eds. Vančo, Ildikó, István Kozmács. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantina Filozofa v Nitre, 2015. 11–23.; CSERNICKÓ, István, Réka MÁTÉ: Bilingualism in Ukraine: Value or Challenge? *Sustainable Multilingualism* 10(2017)/1: 14–35.; HUSZTI, Ilona, István CSERNICKÓ, Erzsébet BÁRÁNY: Bilingual education: the best solution for Hungarians in Ukraine? *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 49(2019)/6: 1002–1009.; CSERNICKÓ, István: Languages in Conflict Situation in the Context of the Law of Ukraine “On Education” (2017). In: *Language Politics, Language Situations and Conflicts in Multilingual Societies: Case Studies from Contemporary Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*. Eds. Müller, Daniel, Monika Wingender. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2021. 137–152.



According to the admission regulations, students who did not reach the point limit for Ukrainian, established by the ministry and adapted to Ukrainian native speakers, could not apply for any specialization, not even vocational training. For example, in 2008, 43% of Hungarian high school graduates were excluded from higher education because they did not reach the expected point limit for Ukrainian, although they performed well in their other subjects. It was discriminatory that the Minister only allowed the translation of specialized subjects for two years, which aimed at reducing the ethnic education system, encouraging parents not to enroll their children in schools in their mother tongue.

The new system contradicted the Constitution and existing laws, and it violated the right to equality at admissions.

In response to the suggestions of the minorities, instead of restoring equal opportunities, they put into perspective the transition to Ukrainian-language education, and the minister issued a new decree on the teaching of the Ukrainian language.<sup>7</sup> They increased the number of Ukrainian-language classes which did not and could not compensate for the disadvantage vis-à-vis Ukrainian native speakers, but did not equalize the chances because the requirements of the exam were still adapted to native-speaking graduates.

After the 2010 elections, the candidate of the Party of Regions, Dmitro Tabachnik, considered pro-Russian, became the Minister of Education. He made no substantial changes to the higher education admissions procedure, but applied a double standard and gave priority to the Russian minority:

- Russian language was included among the optional exam subjects, while the languages of the other national minorities were not;
- Ukrainian language exam remained mandatory, the level of the requirement for all specializations remained the standard for Ukrainian native speakers, students in Ukrainian schools and applicants for the Ukrainian language and literature specialization;
- for the correspondence courses, higher education institutions could organize an internal exam in Ukrainian for those who graduated before 2007;

---

<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, in its Decree No. 461 dated 26<sup>th</sup> May 2008, issued a program for improving the teaching of the Ukrainian language for the period 2008–2011 (Міністерство освіти і науки України, Наказ від 26 травня 2008 року N 461.) [http://search.ligazakon.ua/l\\_doc2.nsf/link1/MUS7832.html](http://search.ligazakon.ua/l_doc2.nsf/link1/MUS7832.html). Last accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020.

- higher education institutions could organize internal admissions for courses teaching ethnic language, including Hungarian courses, as a third exam subject.

In this period, the scope of use of the minority languages became narrower and narrower, although languages and the teaching of languages, in themselves, are not only methodological issues; it is rather the acceptance, the status, and the prestige of a language within a given society which greatly contributes to the learning of the given language. In this sense, the social institutions representing the state, the language, the linguistic knowledge, the tolerance and behavior of the people working there play a significant role. In Ukraine, the Hungarian language has a significant and growing tolerance deficit in official circles. This is the conclusion that we drew on the basis of a study conducted in 2008. We asked the opinion about school choice of the parents of an equal number of children attending Ukrainian and Hungarian schools, as well as teachers and principals working in Hungarian schools. We would like to highlight a few typical, essential answers from the results of our research:

- *“In another school, among people of another nationality, he/she might feel as a second rate person and would begin life with a feeling of inferiority.”*
- *“I attended a Ukrainian/Russian school and studying was very difficult, moreover, I haven’t been able to fill in the gaps since then.”*
- *“... wherever we might go, to a hospital, offices, everywhere we are asked: Where do you live? Well, in Ukraine! You don’t speak Ukrainian? Learn it, then! – this is the answer we get every time, even if the given official speaks Hungarian, they won’t utter a word of Hungarian, though we were only taught Russian at school because, back then, this was part of the Soviet Union, we did not study any Ukrainian!”*
- *“... whatever office I have to go to, if they talk back to me rudely in Ukrainian, I immediately choke up, and I don’t even say the things that I could because I get frightened...”*
- *“... if a child does not start his/her school years in a Hungarian school, he/she gets left behind at the very beginning. And it is impossible to make up for this falling behind [...] he/she won’t have factual knowledge even if he/she speaks the language.”*
- *“... in the present conditions, in their first fright parents take their children to the Ukrainian school...”*

- “... unfortunately, we are in such a tight spot that sometimes I fear that if I were sent to the wall, I would go there, and if I were told I was a Ukrainian, I would just nod, because this job guarantees my survival, I have to sustain myself from this...”
- “The majority of Hungarians from here are not familiar with the laws and they don’t know what their rights are.”
- “... there are laws but laws need to be respected, and all these are human factors....”
- “... in my opinion this country, in the state that it is in, is erroneous. And, thus, also its education system. [...] everything here is about corruption, the basis of everything is that someone expects you to sneak something into their pocket. And this is also true in schools... You can just continue your studies, there is no need for knowledge. And this is the most important thing, that education is not based on knowledge, but on money. Money rules everything...”
- “... staying alive is one thing, prevailing is another, and this is something Hungarians are bad at...”
- “... at present, I think that being a Hungarian is something you can do, what is difficult is living like a Hungarian...”<sup>8</sup>

In this decade, the prestige of the Hungarian language at political level in Ukraine was low and subordinate:

- Hungarian language and literature was not accepted as an entrance examination subject in the independent examination centers, not even for the Hungarian language and literature specialization, while Russian language was;
- Hungarian language was not among the subjects of entrance examinations or graduation exams as a foreign language either in the independent examination centers, while the Russian was;
- in Transcarpathian Ukrainian schools, the Hungarian language was not taught either as a second or a third foreign language, while the Russian was;

<sup>8</sup> OROSZ, Ildikó: A kárpátaljai magyar nyelvű oktatás helyzetéről és minőségéről. [On the situation and quality of Transcarpathian Hungarian language education.] In: *Szakmai szocializáció a felsőoktatásban. A pedagógusképzés kihívásai a Kárpát-medencében.* [Professional socialization in higher education. Challenges of teacher training in the Carpathian Basin.] Eds. Pusztai, Gabriella, Tímea Ceglédi. Nagyvárad–Budapest: Partium Publishing House, 2015. 64.

- *while quite a few output certificates were in Russian and Ukrainian, there were no Hungarian–Ukrainian bilingual certificates issued, due to their complexity, “invoking budgetary and printing technical reasons”;*
- *there were no bilingual Ukrainian–Hungarian forms in offices, not even in Beregszász (Berehove) or the Beregszász district which, at that time, were populated by a Hungarian majority, while there were Ukrainian–Russian forms;*
- *clerks did not speak Hungarian to Transcarpathian Hungarian clients, at best they spoke Russian, even at the Beregszász (Berehove) Pension Fund, even though 80% of the population of the district served by the office, at that time, was Hungarian-speaking.*

The state has a great influence on the quality of institutional education, on the one hand, by defining the content and requirements of the educational process and, on the other hand, it can influence the quality of the work through the employment of those participating in the educational process. Since the Declaration of Independence, in the Ukrainian educational system, patriotic Ukrainian education has played an important role which has been implemented by the introduction of several new subjects. The education of the Ukrainian national idea plays a significant role in the content of other subjects as well, while minorities are not even mentioned. For example, minorities and their values are not even mentioned in the fundamentals of Ukrainian art education and singing and music curricula. Even in minority schools, children do not learn about their own culture because the state core curriculum does not include it, the textbooks do not cover it. The educational program for the development of the national minority in their mother tongue is missing from the kindergarten curricula which means that officially, there are no Hungarian-language kindergartens in Ukraine. The document defining the foundations of education, the doctrine of education, says that, in Ukraine, all educational institutions are Ukrainian, only the language of teaching may be Hungarian, Romanian, etc., and that too only during contact hours. To this end, the main criterion for the qualification of educational institutions is usually the students' knowledge of the Ukrainian language and the history of Ukraine, at all levels. For example, at the 2013 comprehensive evaluation of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, state authorities measured the students' level of knowledge on the basis of how well the students of the different specializations mastered

the material of the three foundational subjects completed in the first year: Ukrainian language, the history of Ukraine, and a foreign language.

In the long term, the quality and access to higher education have the greatest impact on public education, and the quality of work there, on the one hand, through teachers having graduated university and bringing a specific mentality and knowledge to their place of work. On the other hand, the possibility and accessibility of further education and the training offer determine, and even limit the life path of students in the current system, their carriers, their life goals and choice of school.

Until Ukraine had gained its independence, there was only one university in Transcarpathia, the Ungvár State University. In the period after the declaration of independence, the expansion of higher education at national level was treated as a priority in order to train the intelligentsia of the independent state as soon as possible. What is characteristic of this period (1994–1996) is the foundation of new higher education institutions which was made easier by the fact that, for a long time, this domain was regulated through ministerial decrees. A common mechanism for the creation of institutions was that a university opened a branch in a city and, then, after the first graduates left the institution, it became independent and grew into a full-fledged higher education institution. In 1991, the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association initiated the establishment of Hungarian-language groups at the Ungvár State University, in those faculties where the number of Hungarian students was significant. At that time, this initiative was rejected by the management of the university, and thus the Hungarian community needed to find another way and, using the opportunities provided by the law, they decided to create a foundation college.

In 1993, at the initiative of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia, the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association and the Transcarpathian Reformed Church, a foundation was set up which, in 1994, created the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teacher Training College (today the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education). The college received its operating license from Kyiv in 1996. The series of negotiations and political consultation regarding the legitimization of the functioning of the college lasted for two years (1994–1996), in which the Ungvár State University, which defended its monopoly position, participated as a significant inhibiting factor. The Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College is maintained by a foundation, and it has never received support from the Ukrainian state.

Following its establishment, several attempts were made to close down the college. For example, in June 2007, the Ministry of Education and Science

of Ukraine unexpectedly ordered a comprehensive evaluation of the institution.<sup>9</sup> The appointed committee, whose members, in addition to the staff of the Ministry, were mainly the deans and staff of the Ungvár State University and the Transcarpathian State University, thoroughly checked the documentation work retroactively for 10 years. As a result of the evaluation (referring to deficiencies such as doctoral degrees obtained in Hungary were not recognized in Ukraine or that the required six square meters of floor space for a computer, according to the regulations, was not given, or that the schedule was posted in Hungarian, etc.) withdrew the right of the college to issue university level certificates at the Faculties of English, Geography, Mathematics and Kindergarten Teacher Training. These specializations had to be reaccredited in Kyiv one year later. A similar comprehensive evaluation was done at the institution twice in 2013: first at the end of the academic year, and then at the beginning of the next, 2013–2014 academic year. Both times, however, the college managed to prove that it operated at the appropriate professional level and in compliance with the laws of Ukraine.

The college primarily trains teachers for the Hungarian-language educational institutions of Transcarpathia given that state universities do not offer training courses for teachers for ethnic schools. Despite of this, the college does not receive any support from the Ukrainian state. Kyiv only prescribes the requirements and organizes the verification of their fulfillment. In the academic year 2022–2023, the college announced admissions for 16 courses at bachelor's level and 10 at master's level. All the study programs of the university possess the appropriate Ukrainian accreditation. The college also underwent successful international institutional accreditation in 2022.

The Language Act adopted in 2012 created a new situation in terms of minority language use.<sup>10</sup> The integration of minorities and the preservation of minority culture also depend on providing adequate conditions for the development of the languages of national minorities. The preservation of minority languages is only possible if society guarantees the scope of their use. The Law provided broad theoretical framework for the use of the mother tongue by minorities in those places where a minority language had been declared to be a regional language. The Act declared 18 languages from Ukraine, including Hungarian, as regional or minority languages. According

---

<sup>9</sup> Decree No. 1814 dated 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Law of Ukraine On the Principles of State Language Policy (Закон України “Про засади державної мовної політики”) <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5029-17>. Last accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020.

to the Law, in the territory of those administrative units (counties, districts, local governments) where the proportion of native speakers of one or more of these languages reached 10 percent, the minority language became usable in official life, in the work of local governments, etc., in addition to the state language. In these places, the language of the minorities could be taught as a second foreign language in the majority schools. This opportunity increased the prestige of minority languages, it created the opportunity for people living in the same area to learn each other's languages.<sup>11</sup>

When on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2014, President Viktor Yanukovich fled Ukraine due to political pressure, a rapid reorganization immediately took place in the Parliament: a new parliamentary majority was created, partly with the same representatives who previously formed the majority of the president's party.<sup>12</sup> The next day, on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014, the new parliamentary power adopted legislation to abolish the Language Act which came into force under the Yanukovich government. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014, however, Oleksandr Turchynov, who temporarily held both the post of president of Ukraine and the speaker of the Parliament in one person, considering the crisis situation in the country, decided that he would not sign the document repealing the 2012 Language Act. Thus, the Law on the Principles of State Language Policy passed in 2012 remained in force. However, the attempt to withdraw the 2012 Language Act became one of the pretexts for the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> At the initiative of members of Parliament, the Ukrainian Constitutional Court finally annulled the law, citing formal reasons, as it was voted against the rules of the House.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> CSERNICKSKÓ, István, Petteri LAIHONEN: Hybrid practices meet nation-state language policies: Transcarpathia in the twentieth century and today. *Multilingua: Journal of cross-cultural and interlanguage communication* 35/1(2016): 1–30.; CSERNICKSKÓ, István, Viktória FERENC: Transitions in the language policy of Ukraine (1989–2014). In: *Sociolinguistic Transition in Former Eastern Bloc Countries: Two Decades after the Regime Change*. Eds. Sloboda, Marian, Petteri Laihonen, Anastassia Zabrodskaja. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2016. 349–377.

<sup>12</sup> CSERNICKSKÓ, István: *Nyelvpolitika a háborús Ukrajnában*. [Language policy in the war-hit Ukraine.] Ungvár: Autdor-Shark, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> CSERNICKSKÓ, István: Language Policy in Ukraine: The burdens of the past and the possibilities of the future. In: *Future Research Directions for Applied Linguistics*. Eds. Simone, E. Pfenninger, Judit Navracscics. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2017. 120–148.

<sup>14</sup> HIRES-LÁSZLÓ, Kornélia et al.: *Ukrainian language policy gone astray: The Law of Ukraine "On Supporting the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" (Analytical Overview)*. Törökbálint: Termini Egyesület, 2020.

After 2014 (after Russia annexed Crimea and an armed conflict broke out in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts), intolerance regarding the use of the language of minorities increased among Ukrainian politicians. The state attributed the unsuccessful integration of minorities to the lack of adequate knowledge of the Ukrainian-language. Instead of examining the causes and causal factors, they recommended methods reminiscent of the Soviet era: they suggested Ukrainian language education instead of mother tongue education, something that the ethnic minorities could not accept, and they used every legitimate tool and forum to make their point.

It is a pedagogical and psychological fact that every person has a first language in which they start talking, in which they think, that they use to communicate with family and their immediate environment, and every other language can only be a second language. Language is, first of all, the tool of learning and thinking, secondly a tool of communication, and a significant component of identity. Minorities also rejected the introduction of Ukrainian-language education because teachers of Transcarpathian Hungarian schools had already experienced the situation when, in the Soviet Union, Russian language was introduced as the language of instruction of certain subjects in Transcarpathian Hungarian schools. In those cases, factual knowledge deteriorated given that students did not understand the material, they only memorized it. Their abstract thinking did not develop, they did not master the technique of independent learning, they could not analyze the material independently and they were not able to synthesize the information obtained, based on the analysis at a higher level, something that would be the essence of learning. Due to the fact that they were not familiar with many memorized words, neither their Russian language skills, nor their mother tongue competences developed. Back then, before the Declaration of Independence, teachers teaching in Ukrainian- and Hungarian-language schools agreed, in this sense, given that they all had the experience of Russian language teaching having been forced upon them. They were fighting together for children to be allowed to learn in their mother tongue, that is, in their first language. Thus, after achieving the country's independence, the Ukrainian national elite, which became the majority from a minority, used a tool against the national minorities in Ukraine which earlier they had been fighting against. The minorities expected the majority, which considered itself democratic, to provide the opportunity for all citizens to freely choose the language in which they wanted to study, as guaranteed by Ukraine's laws and its international commitments.

The representatives of the minorities repeatedly emphasized that the positive examples of European countries should be taken into account when



teaching the state language. For example, in Serbia, Serbian language and literature are taught and assessed in a differentiated manner. There exists a separate curriculum and system of requirements for those whose mother tongue is Serbian, and for those belonging to an ethnic minority whose language is kin to Serbian (for example, Croatian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian), and yet again different for those whose language is structurally different from Serbian and belongs to a totally different language family (for example, Albanian and Hungarian). In Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Hungary, mother tongue education in the language of minorities is legally guaranteed.<sup>15</sup>

The law does not comply with the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities either, adopted in Strasbourg, which states that: “The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for persons belonging to national minorities at all levels of education.”<sup>16</sup> In Hungary, according to the law, German, Slovak, Romanian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Polish and Slovenian schools and high schools operate with state funding and are managed by the ethnic self-governments. In all schools, the language of education and the literature in that language are mandatory graduation exam subjects, as well as Hungarian language and literature. The rest of the subjects are taught in the language of the given ethnic minority in the course of the 12 years. In Hungary, there is no Ukrainian-language school because there is no need for it: parents have not requested the operation of such a school or such a class. According to the information of the President of the Ukrainian minority’s self-government from Hungary, one child was enrolled in the Ukrainian first grade opened in Budapest in 2018 on their initiative. There are Sunday schools organized by the Ukrainian ethnic self-government and, under their management, entirely financed by the Hungarian state.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> CSERNICKSKÓ, István, Mihály TÓTH: *The right to education in minority languages: Central European traditions and the case of Transcarpathia*. Ungvár: Autdor-Shark, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> CSERNICKSKÓ, István: Egy jelenség és ami mögötte van: az ukrán nyelv és a kárpátaljai magyarság. [A Phenomenon and what there is Behind it: The Ukrainian Language and Transcarpathian Hungarians.] *UngBereg* 1999/1. 101.

<sup>17</sup> KATRICESENKO, Tetjana: Jaroslava Hartyanyi: “Ha megfelelően képzett nyelvtanárok oktatnák a magyarokat, megtanulnák az államnyelvet”. [Hartyanyi Jaroslava: “If Hungarians were taught by properly qualified language teachers, they would learn the state language.”] *Kárpatalja.ma*, 2017. 10. 19. <http://www.karpatalja.ma/karpatalja/nezopont/hartyanyi-jaroslava-ha-megfeleloen-kepzett-nyelvtanarok-oktatnak-a-magyarokat-megtanulnak-az-allamnyelvet/>. Last accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

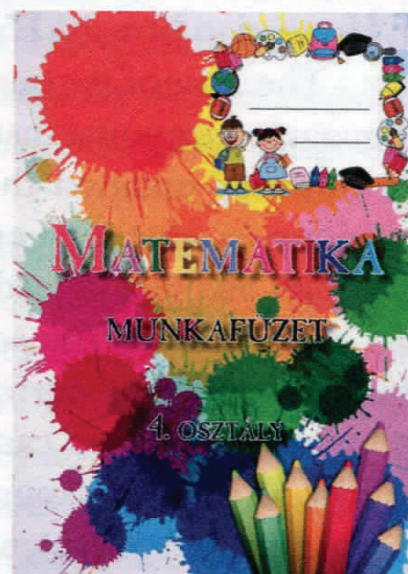
Besides the conditions of education and the material-technical conditions of teaching, the methodological conditions, the staff and their professional and pedagogical preparation and attitude also influence the quality of education.

#### Figures 2–4.

*Covers of school books published by the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association*



Fring Erzsébet  
MÁSODIK  
ZENEKÖNYV



The material and technical equipment of Hungarian-language educational institutions – since they are an integral part of the educational institutions of the majority state, and the students' parents are tax-paying citizens of the given country – should be treated on the same level as that of the majority schools. On the basis of the experiences of three decades, we can state that Hungarian schools benefited from the state budget based on the principle of what was left. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian state has continuously been backing out of financing the ethnic educational system. For example, in three decades, not even a Ukrainian–Hungarian, Hungarian–Ukrainian school dictionary was published with Ukrainian state funds, and the conditions for education in the mother tongue were also limited to the minimum. The school materials that can be produced for Hungarian-language schools are not a suitable market for Ukrainian companies, thus the Ukrainian state does not have the workbooks translated. In Hungarian schools, all school materials and workbooks are prepared by the teachers themselves, as if we were still in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The curricula for singing and music and the basics of art history classes do not contain any ethnic material. Therefore, the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical

Association has developed alternative methodological booklets and workbooks. But these could not be officially used in schools until they received the permission of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The situation is similar with Hungarian methodological reference books, professional books, fiction, illustrative materials, etc. Due to the narrow market, profit-oriented companies do not publish such materials for Hungarian institutions. There is a particularly large shortage in the provision of tools, books, software, and methodological aids for strengthening the knowledge of Hungarian history, Hungarian consciousness and folklore.

The issue of the quality of work done in the Transcarpathian Hungarian-language educational institutions is a defining one because referring to this, the Ministry initiated the amendment of the Law on Education and the transition to education entirely in Ukrainian. Therefore, this issue requires a thorough analysis. Based on an international pilot research in 2013, which also extended to Transcarpathia, we have some information about how Hungarian children performed in mother-tongue and state-language schools, and what correlation can be shown between performance, the added value of schools and the language of instruction.<sup>18</sup> According to the research, in Beregszász (Berehove), where parents could choose from several Hungarian-language schools, the percentage of Hungarian students in Ukrainian schools was 30% in 2013. The researcher stated that “there was a difference in mathematical competence between Hungarian children studying in their mother tongue and in the majority language, in favor of the former”. In the area of text comprehension, native Ukrainians performed significantly better than Hungarians, which is understandable. According to the research, student performance shows a significant correlation with the parental family background: “the higher the parents’ education and the more stable their labor market situation, the better their children performed in both areas of competence”. Kindergarten education and the amount of time spent in kindergarten contribute significantly to the development of competences, especially to the development of text comprehension competence. The research also pointed out that among the Hungarian children, those with a better family background, chose the majority Ukrainian education, while the family background index of those studying in Hungarian schools was the lowest. Inequalities arising from family background can be offset by the

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. PAPP Z., Attila: Iskola és képesség – Egy 2013-as pilot kutatás tanulságai. [School and competence – The lessons learned from a 2013 pilot research.] *Kisebbségkutatás* [Minority Research] 23. (2014) 4. 93–125.

added value of pedagogical work. The investigation pointed out that the competences of Hungarian children attending Ukrainian schools could not be sufficiently developed by the Ukrainian form of education, while among Hungarian schools with the most unfavorable student composition (negative family background index), the pedagogical background work, the added value was the most successful.<sup>19</sup> There was a huge gap in Ukraine between the knowledge of Ukrainian youth studying in their mother tongue and the Hungarian youth studying in Ukrainian. Ukrainian youth studying in their mother tongue perform much better than Hungarians studying in Ukrainian.<sup>20</sup> *The conclusion of the research was that Hungarian children studying in their native language performed better overall than those Hungarian native speakers who were educated in the majority language, i.e. Ukrainian.*

The authorities forced Ukrainian-language education for the minorities in order to ensure the prosperity of the children. However, the question arises: what do they mean by the children's prosperity? The only response the Ukrainian state has given to this question: native level knowledge of the Ukrainian language. This suggests that other values and factual knowledge do not matter. And this raises the question: when does a child speak well the Ukrainian language? And what is the level of Ukrainian language skills that would aid the child's prosperity within the given society? What are the reasons for the fact that, after many years spent in Hungarian-language education, a child does not master the Ukrainian language? These are questions that the Ukrainian state does not, and cannot answer because they have neglected to even ask these questions.

The question of how well a child of an ethnic background needs to know Ukrainian in order to thrive within a society is not primarily an educational but a political issue. It is a political issue because it depends on how inclusive that given society is, what its relation to its minorities is, what rights and opportunities it provides to minorities and how they enforce these.

According to the declarations, Ukraine follows European standards, but it is building a tough nationalist nation-state with hundreds of years of delay. In the field of decrees and laws affecting everyday life, referring to the threat to the Ukrainian nation, it does not expect minorities to integrate into the Ukrainian society, but assimilation into the Ukrainian nation. Therefore, it requires a high level of knowledge of the standard version of the Ukrainian language from everyone, both in life and during further education.

---

<sup>19</sup> FERENC, 2016. 188–207.

<sup>20</sup> PAPP, 2014. 100.

In primary and secondary schools, the Ukrainian language is taught according to the same system of requirements, curriculum structure and methodology for both Ukrainians and minorities, since the teaching of the Ukrainian language is treated as a political, rather than a methodological issue. The Ukrainian language has received the status of state language. For this reason, the idea raised at professional and methodological meetings to teach Ukrainian as a second or foreign language to minorities almost amounts to treason. The given problem is exacerbated by the fact that different minorities are treated with double standards in terms of language skills as well. Slavic languages are understood to some extent by Ukrainians based on their linguistic identity. This is true especially for Russian, given that the majority of the society still grew up in the Soviet Union. News programs from Transcarpathia also appeared on central television, in which the interviewee spoke in the local Slavic dialect (which official Ukrainian does not call Ruthenian but it is considered a dialect of Ukrainian<sup>21</sup>), which differs from the Ukrainian standard to such an extent that the reports had to be captioned. This was not done in the case of Hungarian interviewees, they were expected to speak Ukrainian and, then, if they did not speak the standard Ukrainian version, they and the community would be stigmatized for speaking so poorly or for not knowing the Ukrainian language.

Based on the above, it seems that by 2010, there was a consensus among the Ukrainian political elite that the education of minorities in their mother tongue should be demolished, and implement the 1997–1998 minority concept drafts with legal regulations and decrees, without amending the constitution.

Among the reasons for the political treatment of the language issue can be frustration with the Russians, formed in the course of centuries. There were periods (until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) when, in Russia, Ukrainian was not considered a distinct language but it was treated as a Russian dialect. This feeling of being a minority strengthened in the Soviet system, as a result of which a significant part of Ukrainians became Russian speaking. In order to quickly strengthen national identity, the new independent Ukrainian state does everything in its power to make the state monolingual, and to fasten those assimilation processes that in the majority of European countries happened in the course of hundreds of years. And

<sup>21</sup> “*Ruszin voltam, vagyok, leszek...*” *Népismereti olvasókönyv*. [“I was, am and will be a Ruthenian...” Folk knowledge reader.] Eds. Fedinec, Csilla, István Cserniczkó. Budapest: Charta XXI Association – Gondolat Publishing House, 2019.

from the point of view of tools, enjoying their positions of power, they primarily use their own experience. They use tools that were used against them in the periods of Russification, and they do all this at a forced pace which leads to the disintegration of society.

### 5. Framework Law on Education

The educational opportunities of minorities in their mother tongue were drastically reduced by the new Law on Education, adopted in 2017, which marked the end of the process of reducing the education of minorities in their mother tongue, without amending the Constitution, in violation of all safeguards contained therein. Merely the submission and adoption of the Law caused great social and international debate. Most of the controversy was caused by Article 7 on the language of education, which abolished the previously acquired rights in the field of education in the mother tongue.

The law limits the education of minorities in their mother tongue to the kindergarten and elementary school level (grades 1–4). Starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, it requires a continuous transition to Ukrainian-language training, so that gradually everything is studied in Ukrainian, with the exception of the subjects of the mother tongue and literature; so, students would take their graduation exams in Ukrainian and from the subject Ukrainian. The circumstances of the adoption of the law violated not only the rules of the house, but also the constitution and many existing laws, international conventions ratified by Ukraine, as well as bilateral agreements with neighboring countries:

- The Law violates points 3 and 5 of Article 10 of the Ukrainian Constitution, which guarantees for the ethnic minorities of Ukraine the free development, use and protection of their languages. Points 2 and 3 of Article 22 warrant and guarantee that the content and scope of existing rights cannot be narrowed by the adoption of new laws; point 5 of Article 53 guarantees that ethnic minorities can learn in their mother tongue or learn their mother tongue in state and local institutions.
- Article 7 of the Law does not comply with the *Declaration of Ukraine on the Rights of Nationalities* (1991), the *Law on National Minorities in Ukraine*.
- The Law is contrary to Ukraine's international commitments, and does not comply with the spirit of the following international documents: European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities; Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging

- to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; the document of the Copenhagen Conference of the CSCE (Conference on European Security and Cooperation) dealing with the human dimension and recommendation No. 1201 of the European Parliamentary Assembly approved in 1993.
- It violates the provisions of the document “*Declaration on the principles of cooperation between the Republic of Hungary and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the field of ensuring the rights of national minorities*” signed by Kyiv and Budapest.
  - It is also in contradiction with these international treaties: *Agreement on good neighborly relations and cooperation between Ukraine and Romania*; *Agreement on cooperation between Ukraine and Moldova in the field of ensuring the rights of persons belonging to national minorities*.
  - In accordance with Article 9 of the Constitution of Ukraine, international treaties accepted as binding by the Supreme Council are part of the national legal system of Ukraine.<sup>22</sup>

The 2017 Law on Education negatively affects 100 schools where, today, education still takes place in Hungarian; through the adoption of this Law the Ukrainian state had deprived 16 thousand Hungarian children of their right to study in their mother tongue from kindergarten until graduating secondary school.<sup>23</sup>

After the adoption of the Law on Education, to the initiative of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia, Transcarpathian Hungarians sent a petition to President Petro Poroshenko requesting that he would not sign the document. The Petition was signed by 65 thousand people. Still, President Poroshenko promulgated the law, thus breaching the election agreement concluded with the representatives of the Hungarian community, one of the points of which was that, as elected President, he would do everything in his power for the preservation and development of the Hungarian language educational institutional network that had been created in Ukraine.

<sup>22</sup> <http://kmf.uz.ua/hu/karpataljai-magyar-pedagogusszovetseg-soron-kivuli-kozgyulesek-nyilatkozata-2017-szeptember-5-en-elfogadott-uj-oktatasi-torvennyel-kapcsolatban/>. Last accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

<sup>23</sup> CSERNICKÓ, István, Ildikó OROSZ: *The Hungarian language in education in Ukraine*. Leeuwarden: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, 2019.

In order to annul the anti-minority law, a group of parliamentarians turned to the Constitutional Court, citing the violation of the House rules experienced at the time of the adoption, as partial justification of their request. The Constitutional Court did not grant the claim, even though the Petition requested the annulment of the law for the same reasons on the basis of which the Act on Regional Languages, adopted in 2012, was previously annulled. The Constitutional Court, thus, took a political decision, and this decision is proof of the double standards applied in Ukraine that have become something already natural at the highest levels. We can further draw the conclusion that, in Ukraine, laws are selectively interpreted and implemented, and the Constitution is selectively respected.<sup>24</sup>

Article 7 of the Law on Education dissolved the social contract concluded in 1991 between Ukraine (as a state) and national minorities (as a community of citizens constituting the state). This social contract was concluded by the state through the document “*Declaration of the Rights of Nationalities of Ukraine*” adopted by the Supreme Council on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1991, in which they guaranteed the further securing and expansion of the acquired rights of minorities.

Article 7 of the Law on Education violates the following points of the 1991 Declaration, which can be interpreted as a “social contract”:

**Article 1.** The Ukrainian state guarantees equal political, economic, social and cultural rights to all peoples, ethnic groups and citizens living on its territory. Discrimination on the basis of nationality is prohibited and punishable by law. **Article 2.** The Ukrainian state guarantees all nationalities the right to preserve their traditional settlements, ensures the existence of national-administrative units for them, and undertakes the obligations of creating the necessary conditions for the development of the language and culture of all nationalities. **Article 3.** The Ukrainian state guarantees all peoples and ethnic groups the right to use their mother tongue in all areas of social life, including education, production, information acquisition and communication.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Petition to the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko: Please veto the law on education! <https://www.citizengo.org/hu/ed/92623-vetozza-meg-ukrajna-elnoke-nemzeti-kisebbsegek-jogait-serto-oktatasi-torvenyt>. Last accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

<sup>25</sup> <http://kmf.uz.ua/hu/karpataljai-magyar-pedagogusszovetseg-soron-kivuli-kozgyulesek-nyilatkozata-2017-szeptember-5-en-elfogadott-uj-oktatasi-torvennyel-kapcsolatban/>. Last accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.



The new Law on Education is also unethical because it was adopted on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017, after Ukraine's association agreement with the EU entered into force, and Ukraine was granted visa exemption. With this step, Ukraine broke its previous commitments, democratic norms, and discriminated against EU languages.

The proposals of the Hungarian minority's interests protection and professional organizations were not taken into account by the state bodies, and no consultation had been even held until the summer of 2018. After the consultations, the authorities did not respond to the proposals. As a result of domestic and foreign protests, after signing it, when it had already been put into effect, President Poroshenko sent the Law to the Venice Commission for an opinion and promised that the provisions of this opinion would be taken into account. The Venice Commission sharply criticized the Law,<sup>26</sup> but its proposals were not taken into account by either the President or the Parliament.

In April 2019, the Supreme Council adopted the law on the functioning of the Ukrainian language, as the state language (hereinafter: State Language Act), whose Article 21. literally repeats Article 7 of the Law on Education, supplementing it with two provisions restricting minority languages: (1) admission examinations can only be organized in Ukrainian language; and (2) teaching foreign languages can only happen on the basis of the Ukrainian language. In July 2019, the Constitutional Court adopted the 10-p/2019. s. Decision, which states that Article 7 of the Law on Education complies with the Constitution of Ukraine, thus closing the debate on the constitutionality of the legislative innovations in question at the level of national legislation. The decision is interesting in the sense that a constitutional review of the Law was demanded by a group of representatives, partly on the basis of the same formal and procedural errors as contained in the decision on the repeal of the Act on Regional Languages, for example, one person voted instead of several, etc. This indicates that the Constitutional Court made a political decision, not a legal one.

The enforcement of the State Language Act puts minorities in an even more disadvantaged position. Transcarpathian Hungarians could feel its consequences already at its coming into force. These laws abolished the status of minority schools. All schools are to be considered Ukrainian, and thus only

---

<sup>26</sup> Opinion on the provisions of the Law on Education of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017, which concern the use of the State Language and Minority and other Languages in Education, adopted by the Commission at its 113<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session. [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2017\)030-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2017)030-e). Last accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

the Ukrainian language should be used even in interpersonal communication. Children and the staff can only use Hungarian during classes. This rule also applies to signposts, illustrative materials and school events. Referring to a citizen complaint in 2021, the ombudsman who monitors compliance with the Law, asked for an explanation as to why school events (Christmas, parents' meetings, opening of the school year, end of the school year, etc.) were held in Hungarian in some Hungarian-language schools, why there were mostly Hungarian posts on the school's website and Facebook. The headmaster of a Hungarian school was reported because he made a statement in Hungarian for a Hungarian TV channel, which was subtitled in Ukrainian, but according to the whistleblower, the law stipulated that the head of a local government institution could only speak in Ukrainian anywhere in his official capacity.<sup>27</sup> From July 2021, only those can become kindergarten leaders or school principals who have passed the state language exam at level C1.

It also follows from the above that the language issue has gained huge dimensions, but only unilaterally because it always focuses on Ukrainian language knowledge, while it does not focus on minority linguistic rights and minority mother tongue education.

By 2017, the Ukrainian state has also largely backed out of state ethnic education, performing only basic functions. With the introduction of Ukrainian as the language of instruction, there is no need for the publication of mother tongue course books for the ethnic schools, except for the elementary level (grades 1 to 4). In the 30 years of independence, no Hungarian workbooks for the taught subjects have been published, no Ukrainian–Hungarian/Hungarian–Ukrainian school dictionaries have been published from the state budget, and the academic dictionary, which is the basis of all other dictionaries, has not been completed either. There are not enough alphabet books in Hungarian schools from which first graders should learn, therefore, parents have to photocopy the books and workbooks, there are not enough course books for the other subjects either, and there is no possibility to purchase them because they are not in commercial circulation. At the beginning of the academic year 2017–2018, there was a shortage of 28,057 textbooks in Hungarian-language schools, of which 3,383 were Ukrainian language and literature textbooks.

---

<sup>27</sup> File number 262/4,2-02/21-Yy dated 16.02.2021 of the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language, 25.03.2021. dated registration number 864/4,2-03/21-y, 25.03.2021. dated 863/42-03/21-y, as well as citizen report No. ПІО-10674942 registered on the internet on 20.05.2020

## 6. Programs aimed at supporting Transcarpathian education

The representation of Transcarpathian Hungarians turned to Ukrainian state bodies in vain to assert their rights, they only found deaf ears. In many cases, they did not deal with the problems raised, citing that the state was poor, and therefore could not satisfy their legitimate demands, the minorities should solve them on their own. Hungarian organizations, thus, tried to deal with their community problems through foundations. Primarily foundations from Hungary were the ones to support Hungarian-language minority education. The subsidies came in a transparent manner, within the legal framework defined by the Ukrainian state. The programs were all taxable, and increased the Ukrainian state budget by a significant amount. Despite this, the civil organizations that received the grants were accused of separatism by the authorities, and at the foundations of the Hungarian community there were house searches held in 2021 on charges of treason. The procedure was also absurd because all foreign aid brings multiple benefits to the Ukrainian state:

1. All grants are taxable in Ukraine.
2. Such grants contribute directly and indirectly to the creation of new jobs.
3. In new workplaces, employers pay tax on employees, and employees pay personal income tax and military levy on their income, which also contribute to the state budget.
4. The created jobs help the preservation of the state and the survival of the population that guarantees economic development.
5. The donations intended for the socio-cultural sphere also help the country in the implementation of the tasks that should have been solved by the state in the last three decades since the users of this socio-cultural sphere are citizens and taxpayers of Ukraine.
6. By undertaking public tasks, they not only improve the working conditions and comfort of the population, but also contribute to the modernization of public institutions, which reduce the maintenance costs of buildings and contribute to their long-term operation.
7. Thanks to the subsidies, the resources to be provided in the state budget for this purpose can promote the balance of the budget, and the savings can be redistributed for the development of other domains.

The biggest attack was launched against the Charitable Foundation for the Transcarpathian Hungarian College, whose president, László Brenzovics,

is also the president of the largest Hungarian political interest protection organization, the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia. Both the foundation and László Brenzovics's house were searched. In the two years, no indictment has been brought, but due to the harassment and the lack of legal certainty, László Brenzovics was forced to leave the country.

The main task of the Charitable Foundation for the Transcarpathian Hungarian College is the operation and development of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education. The College has been operating since 1996, with the permission and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, but does not receive support from the state budget of Ukraine. For its operation, the mentioned foundation receives a significant part of the funds through tender projects. Professional control over the institution's activities is exercised by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine; the College must comply with all laws and regulations. The institution trains professionals for the Ukrainian labor market, its students are all tax-paying Ukrainian citizens. Full-time students receive a scholarship, in accordance with Ukrainian state standards, yet not from the state, but from the sponsors of the College. More than 100 students receive social grants, which means that the institution provides higher education opportunities for children from low-income families living in the county. The state also deducts tax from scholarships paid to students.

#### **Pictures 1–2.**

*The inauguration of the building of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education*



According to the statutes of the college, the languages of instruction in the institution are Ukrainian, Hungarian and English. All Ukrainian-speaking students of the College have the opportunity to write tests, theses, bachelor

and master's theses in the language of their choice (usually Ukrainian, English or Hungarian), and to take exams in the language of their choice. This opportunity is not provided to Hungarian students in state institutions.

**Pictures 3–4.**

*The building of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education before the start of renovation works*



**Picture 5.**

*The building of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education today*



Starting out from the fact that a significant number of students enrolled to the College come from Ukrainian-language high schools, the institution organizes separate Ukrainian groups for the teaching of general subjects (for example, Pedagogy, Psychology). In practice, the following system

also applies: if the lectures are given in one language (for example, Ukrainian), then the practical lessons are held in another language (for example, Hungarian) and vice versa.

Despite the fact that all the students are Ukrainian citizens, that they and their parents pay taxes, the College does not receive any financial support from the state budget. At the same time, the College is the largest tax-payer of Beregszász (Berehove). Between 2017 and 2021, in 5 years, the Foundation that maintains the College supported the budget of the Ukrainian state with the amount of UAH 253,247,815, which is also significant because the 2021 budget of the city of Beregszász (Berehove) amounted to UAH 240,000,000.

The Foundation manages several large projects, thanks to which state institutions are renovated. The projects realized through the Foundation represent one of the best examples of civil sphere cooperation between the Hungarian and Ukrainian states, with impressive results that significantly improve the living conditions of the local population (regardless of nationality and native language).

The Eastern Partnership Ukraine's Development Cooperation project was launched in 2012. So far, a total of 120 educational, social, cultural and health institutions have been renovated with this support. Thanks to the project, 17 institutions could be renovated between 2017–2019 in the amount of UAH 20,704,222.57 (USD 751,871.01). In a separate project, 7 institutions were renovated in 2018–2019 for UAH 2,506,495.83 (USD 91,045.98). In 2019, UAH 27,516,943.57 (USD 1,053,481.76) were spent for the renovation of 15 institutions, and in 2020, 15 institutions were renovated in the amount of UAH 27,407,431.30 (USD 968,460.47). So, between 2017 and 2020, 54 state or municipal-owned institutions could be partially or fully renovated in the amount of UAH 78,135,093.27 (USD 2,864,859.22).

The “Renovation of medical clinics in Transcarpathia” project was implemented in 2017–2020, within the framework of which a total of 40 medical institutions were renovated throughout Transcarpathia for a total amount of UAH 46,772,810.64 (USD 1,723,738.07).

Two projects also supported the renovation of the Transcarpathian County Drama Theatre. In 2017–2020, the Transcarpathian County Hungarian Drama Theater was completely renovated in the amount of UAH 9,761,765.18 (USD 371,872.89). In 2018–2020, the Fedák Sári Cultural Center was established in the theater building, which contributed to the

revitalization of cultural life in Beregszász (Berehove). UAH 13,488,644.89 (USD 534,675.84) was spent on the renovation and equipment of the Fedák Sári Cultural Center. In total, the foundation spent UAH 23,250,410.07, i.e. USD 906,548.73, for the renovation of the theater located in the historic building in the center of the city of Beregszász (Berehove) (for which the municipality had had no budget for decades).

The largest project of the Foundation is the “Renovation of Transcarpathian Base Schools” project. Within this framework, the largest regional self-governing educational institutions could be renovated, for which no state funds had been available during the 30 years of independence. The first phase of the renovation took place between 2017–2020. Within the framework of the project, 5 institutions were renovated for a total amount of UAH 208,635,311.25 (USD 7,701,193.69). The program will last until 2025, during which 28 buildings are planned to be renovated for a total of UAH 489,718,109.78 (USD 41,565,294.75).

From 2017 to 2022, the Transcarpathian Hungarian College Charitable Foundation supported a total of 124 state and local government institutions in the framework of 13 different programs in the amount of UAH 637,876,423.76 (USD 47,060,440.77), for which the Ukrainian state had no money.

State and local government institutions were supported by the State Secretariat for National Policy of the Office of the Prime Minister of Hungary in the framework of the “Carpathian Basin Kindergarten Development Program”. The Ukrainian partners of the program were the historical churches and the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association. Within the framework of the program, 110 state or municipal kindergartens and educational complexes received financial support:

1. 73 Hungarian-language kindergartens;
2. 30 bilingual institutions (where there is both Hungarian- and Ukrainian-language education);
3. 7 institutions with only Ukrainian groups.

Some of the renovated kindergartens are operated by the county, and some of them operate under the control of the local government. The largest amount of the subsidies was meant for the renovation and modernization of the institutions. Within the framework of the program, the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association purchased estates and renovated school-buildings in 11 settlements. In 2017–2021, the contractors paid almost UAH 5,500,000 in taxes to the state, and this amount does not include the social contributions required to pay wages.

**Pictures 6–7.**

*The inauguration of kindergartens renovated within the framework of the Carpathian Basin Kindergarten Development Program*



The implementation of these projects has contributed to the improvement of the infrastructural conditions of the Transcarpathian state and local government education network and the network of cultural and social institutions, thereby improving the living conditions of the population living in the region. Now, in the time of the war that broke out on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, these institutions were able to accommodate under suitable conditions the refugees who arrived to Transcarpathia. The implementation of the projects could have promoted the development of cooperation and friendly relations between Hungary and Ukraine, but the Ukrainian state saw only external intervention in all of these projects, despite the fact that renovations were carried out through the aforementioned programs, which would have been a Ukrainian state's tasks that they had been unable to fulfil in three decades. Instead of gratitude, the Ukrainian authorities have banned several high-ranking Hungarian officials from Ukraine.



## NOTES ON AUTHORS

**Dr. Erzsébet Molnár D.**, Ph.D., historian (Beregszász [Berehove], 1979) – She obtained her Special diploma in history at the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Training College (today the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education) in 2003, and her Ph.D. at the History and Ethnography Doctoral School of the University of Debrecen in 2015. Since 2022 she has been teaching at the History and Social Sciences Department of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education and she has been working at the Lehoczky Tivadar Social Sciences Research Institute, becoming leader of the Institute in 2021.

**Dr. Natália Váradi**, Ph.D., historian (Beregszász [Berehove], 1980) – She obtained her Special diploma in history, English language and world literature at the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Training College (today the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education) in 2003, and her Ph.D. at the History and Ethnography Doctoral School of the University of Debrecen in 2008. In 2013 she defended the title of Candidate of Historical Sciences in Kyiv at the Institute of Ukrainian History of the National Academy of Science. In 2021 the Scientific Council of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine awarded her the degree of associate professor in the field of history and social sciences. Since 2004 she has been the director of the Adult Training Center of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, since 2007 member of the Department of History and Social Sciences, since 2011 director of the „GENIUS” Charity Foundation. Her main research interests are: Transcarpathia in the Khrushchev era, specifically the Transcarpathian aspects of the 1956 Revolution.

**Karolina Darcsi**, political scientist (Dercen [Dertsen], 1980) – She obtained her Special Diploma in geography and history at the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Training College (today the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education) in 2002, and then an MA in public policy at the Századvég Political School of Corvinus University, Budapest in 2006. She also graduated from the Doctoral School of Political Sciences of the University of Pécs in 2006. At present she is a member of the History and Social Sciences Department of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, and researches at the Lehoczky Tivadar Social Sciences Research Institute of the College. Her main research interests are: opportunities for Transcarpathian Hungarians to assert their interests in independent Ukraine; public administration, local governments, enforcement of minority rights.

**Dr. Ildikó Orosz**, Ph.D., educational scientist (Nagydobrony [Velyka Dobron], 1960) – She earned her M.Sc. diploma in mathematics at the Ungvár State University in 1983. In 1981 she started working as a mathematics teacher at the Nagydobrony High School, and between 1990 and 1995 she was the headmaster of the school. In 2001 she earned her Ph.D. in educational sciences at the Humanities Doctoral School of the University of Debrecen. In 2013 she defended her C.Sc. at the Volodimir Hnatyuk Ternopili National Pedagogical University in general pedagogics and the history of pedagogics. At present she is President of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education and of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association, associate professor of the Psychology Department of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education. Her main research fields include minority education and the situation of mother tongue education in Transcarpathia since the system change till today.

**Prof. Dr. István Cserniczkó**, D.Sc., linguist (Csap [Chop], 1973) – He is Professor of Linguistics at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove/Beregszász, Ukraine, and at the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary. He has published widely on multilingualism, language policy and language rights in Transcarpathia, in English, Hungarian, Russian, and Ukrainian. He graduated from Uzhhorod State University in 1995. He obtained his Ph.D. in Budapest, at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), in 2001, and also completed his habilitation here in 2012. He obtained the title of Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) in 2019, and he is an external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His main research interests are language policy, linguistic rights, language and education, bi- and multilingualism.

**Dr. Andrea Bocskor**, Ph.D., historian and politician (Beregszász [Berehove], 1978) – She graduated at the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teachers' Training College majoring in English–History. She defended her Ph.D thesis in 2010 at the ELTE–BTK in Budapest. In 2013 she defended the title of Candidate of Historical Sciences in Kyiv at the Institute of Ukrainian History of the National Academy of Science. Before getting the Mandate of Member of the European Parliament, she was a associate professor of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education at the Faculty of History and Social Sciences and Director of the Lehoczky Tivadar Institute in Beregszász. She has been a Member of the European Parliament since 2014. Her main political aim is to represent the Transcarpathian Hungarian minority in the EU, to promote the rights of national minorities and European cultural and linguistic diversity and to ensure the use of minority languages at the European level. Moreover, to support the European integration and the political and economic stability of Ukraine.

**Struggle for Survival. The Transcarpathian Hungarians (1944–2022).** Studies.  
Authors: Erzsébet Molnár D. – Natália Váradi – Karolina Darcsi – Ildikó Orosz –  
István Csernicskó. Reviewed by: László Brenzovics. Translator: Boróka Prohászka  
Rád. Budapest: Méry Ration Publishing, 2022. – 240 pages.

**ISBN 978-80-907355-9-0**

This book presents the most important turning points, between 1944 and 2022, of the history of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community, referred to as the “little finger” of the Hungarian nation, our turbulent and painful past, our struggles for survival and self-identity, for our political, linguistic and educational rights, a community forced by the several changes of power within the region from being a majority nation into a minority status. Due to its geographical location and geostrategic significance, Transcarpathia often became a prey to the aspirations of great powers in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and thus the inhabitants of the region turned into citizens of five different states without ever having left their homeland, their home.

The so-called Soviet period between 1944 and 1991 started off with the deportation of tens of thousands of the Hungarian and German male population of Transcarpathia, therefore it is often called the most tragic period of the history of Transcarpathian Hungarians.

Of course, no one would have thought that our generation will also have to live through a total war, with all its horrors and tragedies. Transcarpathian Hungarians are loyal citizens of Ukraine, they have a strong sense of local identity, and their main desire is to be able to live peacefully, as Hungarians, in their homeland. It is impossible to understand the present without knowing the past! Let us, then, get to know the past of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community, and thus understand its present.

# Struggle for Survival The Transcarpathian Hungarians (1944–2022)

Studies

2022

Authors:

*Erzsébet Molnár D. – Natália Váradi – Karolina Darcsi – Ildikó Orosz – István Csernicsekó*

Reviewed by:

*László Brenzovics*

Edited by:

*Andrea Bocskor, István Csernicsekó, Erzsébet Molnár D.*

Translator:

*Boróka Prohászka Rád*

Proofreading by:

*Enikő Tankó*

Design and pagination:

*Melinda Orbán*

Cover:

*László Vezsdel*

Cover image © László Vezsdel

Back image © László Bocskor

Coordinated by: Andrea Bocskor and Zsolt Szilágyi

The book was published thanks to the kind support of the Ministry of Justice of Hungary  
(Project No. IX-SZ/728/2/2021)

Publisher: © Platform of European Memory and Conscience, 2022  
Londýnská 43, 120 00 Prague, Czech Republic



The writings reflect the authors' own opinions.  
The book can be distributed only free of charge.  
All rights reserved.

Publishing and printing:  
Méry Ratio

Font: Garamond. Munken chamois offset, 100 g/m<sup>2</sup>.  
Published in 1000 copies.