

I BACKGROUND STUDY OF THE HUNGARIAN– ROMANIAN AND THE HUNGARIAN– UKRAINIAN BORDER REGIONS

1 Hungarian–Romanian border region

1.1 Historical dimension

The Hungarian–Romanian border region experienced several stormy periods, just like the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region, although its development from its creation until now has been totally different. Although the present Hungarian–Ukrainian borderline is a young formation created by the *peace treaty signed in the Great Trianon Palace* around Paris on 4 June 1920, the border region in the broader sense had already had frontier functions during the course of history. The present border region is situated where the “core area” of the historical Hungary, and Transylvania, a territory that had always had a kind of independence, meet. This frontier function became especially palpable in the mid–16th century, when Hungary broke into three pieces as a result of the Turkish occupation and the *Duchy of Transylvania* became independent. From that time on, the internal borderlines dividing Hungary began to function as real borderlines and became a military, political and cultural buffer zone for a long time.

In addition to the frequent changes of the borders as a function of the power relations, the already difficult situation is further complicated by the fact that a significant part of the present border region belonged to the so-called *Partium*, i.e. the “*annexed parts*”. The name of the territory comes from the fact that the Hungarian “parts” consisting of four counties were awarded to the princes of Transylvania during the 16th and 17th centuries, without being annexed to Transylvania, with the condition that after the death of the last prince these territories would be subject to the authority of the Hungarian king again. After several changes of the authority, in 1877 this territory was melted into the neighbouring counties, so it ceased to exist in the administrative sense of the word.

The *border zone between the Kingdom of Hungary and Transylvania*, a part of the Kingdom with its own inner public administration, *never functioned as a dividing border* – with the exception of the time of the Turkish occupation –, *unlike the present borderline between Hungary and Romania*. The internal border, almost unnoticeable for centuries, became a very much palpable borderline after the *Peace*

Treaty of Trianon – with a different location, though. Probably it was Romania among the neighbouring countries the relationship to whom was the most tense for a long time. It is mostly due to the fact that among the artificially designated new state borders, the designation of the Hungarian–Romanian border, completely neglecting the ethnic relations, was the most painful for the mutilated mother country, because of the loss of territories bigger than the “remaining” country and the large number of Hungarian ethnic population living in them. The new eastern borders cut the biggest territory and population from Hungary. As much as 103 thousand square kilometres and 3.5 million population was given to Romania, of whom some 1.7 million declared themselves Hungarians. It was logical that the most frequently declared objective of the Hungarian revisionist efforts was to reclaim Transylvania and the Partium from Romania, in addition to Upper Northern Hungary from Slovakia. This was achieved temporarily by the two Vienna Awards made in 1938 and 1940.

Following World War II, just because of the temporary re-annexation of the North Transylvanian territories to Hungary, the Romanians became rather untrusting towards the Hungarians. Also, because of the debates and other measures further exacerbating the assumed or real *ethnic conflicts*, the mutual lack of trust caught hold in the thinking of the two nations (mostly of the leading elite). The “friendship and brotherhood” declared in the socialist era only existed in the slogans, in reality the relationship between the two countries was rather tense. The *border functioned as a real wall* in these times, practically blocking any co-operation and it was almost impossible even to pass the border. Following the revolution of 1989, the collapse of the dictatorship of Ceausescu, the hope was born for the settling of the relationships. However, the co-operation quickly starting at lower levels was seriously hindered by the reviving *nationalism*, which brought to the surface again the latent or suppressed problems, which naturally resulted in the growing fear of the modifications of the border.

Although there are definitely positive changes in the relationship of the two countries nowadays, it is very difficult to annihilate the prejudices gathered for decades or centuries, so it is feared that the problems may occasionally appear for a long time. The favourable political, economic and social transitions, however, gradually amount to the easing of the suspicious, untrusting and consequently often tense relations, because both parties are slowly starting to recognise the necessity of co-operation, learning from the European examples. The co-operation as close as possible is inevitable not only because of the Euro-Atlantic integration of the two countries, but also because the Trianon borders tore apart economic units that had functioned for centuries, and divided shaping macro-regions. The dominant principle behind the designation of the border was the principle of “*reorganization*”, which aimed at the creation of viable successor states by the acquisition of the necessary macro-infrastructure, above all the traffic system, especially the key

railway networks. This is why the victorious powers awarded to the successor states the semi-circle shaped railway network constructed on the line of medieval market towns, on the edge of the mountains and the Great Hungarian Plain, which of course created the connection among the states of the shaping Little Entente. The “railway-driven” state borders, however, neglected not only the ethnic borders (they ran in almost completely Hungarian-inhabited territories), but also tore the towns of the direct border region and their catchment areas, in some cases even splitting settlements (e.g. Nagylak). The result was a distorted spatial structure on both sides, and in Hungary also a town-deficient border region, peripheral in both economic and spatial structural sense, was born.

The designation of the border resulted in harmful effects that are still palpable, and the elimination of the negative consequences can only be achieved by the operation as a single region of the territories that used to make an organic whole. In order to achieve this, however, the borderline separating the two countries has to disappear not only from the map but also from the minds of the people, especially the responsible political leaders.

Over the decade and a half since the systemic change, the opinion about the border of those living along the eastern borders of Hungary changed several times and rather quickly. After the strict isolation typical for long decades, the change of the political systems in 1989 raised the hope in many that the opening of the borders would allow the regular touch with their relatives on the other side of the border, and that the relationship between the two countries would be finally normalised. The initial enthusiasm, however, was soon overshadowed by the difficulties concomitant with the systemic change, because in Hungary it was mostly the eastern part of the country, originally in a backward position that suffered the most from the economic transformation, the shift to the market economy. The declining standards of living, the mass unemployment etc. made more and more people think that the unlimited opening of the Eastern borders was a mistake. The Hungarian–Romanian border was crossed not only by masses of emigrants escaping from the troubled inner political conditions following the revolution in Romania, but a formerly unknown phenomenon, criminals and illegal workers appeared, too.

Parallel to these processes, in the East Hungarian areas, suffering from very many difficulties anyway, more and more people became anxious about their living after the mass influx of cheap labour, and many people also felt that the reception of refugees was an excessive sacrifice by Hungary. The concerns that are still present sometimes are well demonstrated by the fact that those who opposed the signing of the Hungarian–Romanian Agreement Declaration in 2001 forecast the inflow of millions of Romanian labour force – but these fears later turned out to have no ground.

These days *uncertainty is not so typical feeling any more of those who live in the direct border region*, because it is certain now that Romania (after the Hungar-

ian accession on 1 May 2004) will join the European Union in 2007 too, which raises several issues. It is perceived by the people on both sides of the border that the role of the region will be significantly appreciated after it becomes temporary an external and after 2007 an internal EU border, which offers a possibility never seen before for the catching up. Despite the large number of open questions, most people on both sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border are looking forward to the possibility of the restoration of the former, organically born economic, infrastructural etc. relations and to the decrease of the separating role of the border.

1.2 Legal dimensions

The present *Hungarian–Romanian border region* (Figure 1) – as we have referred to it several times before – is not the product of an organic historical development, it was created *on legal grounds*, it is *an artificial borderline created by the Peace Treaty of Trianon* signed on 4 June 1920. The designation of the border, which totally neglected the arguments of Hungary and the ethnic principles, carried from the beginning the danger of territorial revision in case of another war. This actually took place after the *2nd Vienna Award* (when North Transylvania and the Székely Land were annexed back to Hungary, temporarily increasing the territory of the mother country with 43.5 thousand km²-s and 2.6 million inhabitants).

Following the conclusion of World War II, however, the state borders designated at Trianon were restored. The agreement on the re-start of goods traffic was signed with Romania first (as soon as in 1945). At this time the bilateral border traffic covering the direct border zone (a 10–15 kilometre wide stripe) was revived, but this had to be eliminated, by the pressure of the Soviets. During the 1950s, the defence of the border became more and more serious; sometimes mine blockades were located along the borders of even the “friendly socialist countries”. No wonder that the traffic across the border dropped to a fraction of what it had been before.

The easing of the political climate only allowed in 1969 the *bilateral border traffic* (border crossing stations only available for the citizens of the two countries), although with significant restrictions. Only those were entitled for a licence to use these bilateral border crossings who lived within a 15 kilometre distance from the border (excluding from the beneficiaries the whole of the Hungarian ethnic group living in the Székely Land), and only certain border crossing stations could be used. During the 1970s, the improvement of the technical and living conditions (car use, the opening of more and more border stations, the boom of tourism etc.), as well as the political consolidation considerably increased the traffic across the Hungarian–Romanian border, too. Although the border became more closed again

during the dictatorship of Ceausescu, no restrictions were introduced in the form of official contract between the two states. It is another issue that other official tools (taxes, duties, requirement of the proof of financial coverage of the stay abroad etc.) and less official ones (presents and tips to the frontier guards; passengers intentionally kept waiting for a long time) efficiently influenced the will to travel, and these “habits” are still there sometimes, making the trip difficult for the passengers.

Figure 1

The Hungarian–Romanian border region



Source: Edited by the authors. CRS of HAS Debrecen Department.

The legal frameworks of the border defence and border traffic will significant change again because of the introduction of the Schengen norms, which Hungary will have to apply when becoming a full-right member of the European Union. However, as the Romanian citizens can travel without visa to the member states of the European Union since 2002, the main difficulty will be not the more strict legal regulations but the proof of the adequate financial means.

In addition to the agreements on the border defence and border traffic, of course several other *inter-state agreements* were made between Hungary and Romania which directly influenced the progress of the cross-border relations. The most im-

portant is the *Hungarian–Romanian Treaty* (Act No. XLIV. of 1997), which basically determine the frameworks of co-operation. The primary task of the *inter-governmental special committees* set up in accordance with the Treaty (e.g. Special Committee for the Co-operation of the Ethnic Minorities, Special Committee for the Co-operation in the Field of Economy, Trade and Tourism, Special Committee of Cross-border Issues and Inter-municipal Co-operation, Special Committee for the Co-operation in the Field of Transport, Water Management and Environmental Protection etc.) is to work out and supervise the co-operations concerning the “common issues” of Hungary and Romania.

Several *co-operation agreements* between the two countries were and are still in effect, covering almost all fields of the socio-economic life (e.g. the agreement on inter-modal freight traffic, Hungarian–Romanian investment protection agreement, agreement on the mutual recognition of degrees and certificates issued by accredited educational institutions and of academic degrees, Hungarian–Romanian agreement on the co-operation in privatisation etc.). Among the *agreements*, the ones on *water management* and environmental protection are of special importance because of the geographical endowments.

The basic framework in this latter issue was defined by the *Hungarian–Romanian Agreement on the Border Rivers*, signed in 1986, and the agreement on the “*Co-operation in the field of the protection of the environment*”, in effect since 2000. Several other water management agreements are still in effect, too (e.g. the *Agreement on Flood Protection*, *Agreement on the Inland Waterways*, *Regulation of the Exchange of Information* etc.). A closer co-operation is evidently justified by the fact that the border section divides natural eco-systems (including eco-corridors of great value), also, there is a surface and sub-surface water connection between the two territories, with several rivers and streams crossing the border, there are common surface and subsoil water bases in the region. In addition, the industry in the border region – especially in the Romanian part – is characterised by outdated and polluting technologies, which means a high environmental risk, justified by the series of cyanide and heavy metal pollutions of the Tisza River and the tributaries.

Besides the Treaty and the international agreements in effect, the direct cross-border co-operation is considerably affected *from the Hungarian side by the Act No. XXI of 1996 (on Regional Development and Physical Planning) and its amendment in 1999*, while the similar *Act No. CLI of 1998 and the connected government decrees in Romania*, which provide a legal framework for the developments affecting the border region, implemented from national and other resources.

In the relationship of Hungary and Romania in the recent years, the greatest attention was gained by the *Act No. LXII of 2001 on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries* (commonly known as the “*Status Law*”) and the connected so-called “*Hungarian–Romanian Declaration of Agreement*”. As regards the execution of the Act, which provided special (health care, travel, employment etc.)

allowances for the Hungarians living outside Hungary, no final solution has been reached until now, despite the series of negotiations.

The legal frameworks of the co-operation are considerably affected by the *changes in connection with the Euro-Atlantic integration processes*, because there are significant differences in this respect between the two countries. Hungary became a full-right member of the European Union on 1 May 2004, following the signing of the accession treaty on 16 April 2003. Romania, on the other hand, is not included in the first round of the enlargement, and the associated member status, which Romania gained in 1993, will remain in effect until 2007. Although considerable progress has been achieved in Romania too in the field of the harmonisation of law, the country reports regularly mentioned that no actual progress has been made in the field of the assertion of the principle of partnership and in the establishment of monitoring, evaluation and the system of regional statistics – despite the fact that each of these alone sets back the accession to the European Union.

Although there are no special administrative units or separate border government system on either side of the border, three *business zones* have been created on the Hungarian side (the Bihar, the Békés county and the Makó Business Zones), which offer different allowances and try to utilise the advantages of the border location and strengthen the economic co-operation between the border regions.

In the intensification of the cross-border co-operation, a significant role can be played by the *Euroregions* created in the 1990s and the more recently shaping smaller scale Euroregional organisations and initiatives, and by the *twin city relations*, which may be the most effective tools of everyday operative co-operation (e.g. Nyíregyháza–Szatmárnémeti¹, Debrecen–Nagyvárad², Békéscsaba–Arad, Szeged–Temesvár³ etc.)

In the Hungarian–Romanian border region, two large Euroregions with different character, history and operational conditions can be found: the *Carpathians Euroregion* and the *Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion* (Figure 2). The direct preliminary of the establishment of the Carpathians Euroregion covering the Northern half of the border region was the creation of the Carpathians Foundation in 1989, which for the first time in Hungary declared the importance of keeping in touch with the people on the other side of the border. Because of the stormy historical events of these years and in order to decrease the tensions, the representatives of the border regions of the neighbour states concerned (*Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and The Ukraine*) sat down and founded on 14 February 1993 (using the already existing organisational elements of the Carpathian Foundation) the *Interregional Organisation of the Carpathians Euroregion*, which Romania joined not so much afterwards.

¹ In Romanian: Satu Mare.

² In Romanian: Oradea.

³ In Romanian: Timișoara.

Figure 2

Euroregions in the Hungarian border region

This huge interregional organisation – as opposed to the *Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion* founded in 1997 – is not an independent, bottom-up initiative, it started to work within frameworks defined “from above”, considering higher political objectives. In addition, the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion re-connected territories along the south-eastern borders of Hungary which had been a relatively more developed area within a single country, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and had common historical past going back to centuries, whereas the Carpathians Euroregion is an absolutely “multinational” formation.

Although both Euroregions have had and still have an indisputable role in the recognition of the partnership based on mutual advantages, they have not been able yet to implement their original objectives, because of different factors. The achievement of really intensive multilateral connections is blocked by the *excessive size* of the Euroregions in the first place: the territory of the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion covers 77,000 km²-s, that of the Carpathians Euroregion is 161,000 km²-s, their population reaches six and sixteen million people, respectively. In addition to their too large size, especially in the territory of the Carpathians Euroregion, co-operation is hindered by historical–territorial– ethnic and other problems, inherited from the past. Having recognised these problems, the local actors were thinking about the establishment of smaller and thus more effective Euroregional organisations. The concepts were followed by actions and now three micro-regional type interregional organisations operate along the border (Interregio, Hajdú-Bihar–Bihar and the Bihar–Bihar Euroregional Organisation).

1.3 Political dimension

During the economic and political systemic change taking place at the end of the 1980s and concerning all East-Central European countries, the single party systems, typical of the socialist state construction, were replaced again by *parliamentary democracy*. Both in Hungary and in Romania the system of political control was reorganised, and public administration, also the role of the individual tiers within the power hierarchy gradually transformed as a part of the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

Another common feature is the fact that the former totally *centralised*, “top-down controlled” *system* was replaced by an effort for *decentralisation*, giving the *local self-governance*, above all the *municipal governments* a role much more important than before. Although the extent of decentralisation is not the same in the two countries (especially Romania has still a lot to do in this respect), the self-organising spatial units are present now in both countries.

The official cross-border relations are considerably set back by the fact that while in Hungary the *micro-regions*, compatible with the fourth tier of the NUTS

system (the statistical planning system of the European Union) have been created, in Romania there is no “official” spatial level at this level (apart from the different self-organising micro-regional associations). In Romania it is still the County Councils that represent the lowest tier above the municipal governments and the meso-tier in the national hierarchy. Although the NUTS 2 level regions were built in both countries on the still operating counties (NUTS 3 level), the role and independence of the latter is much more restricted in Romania than in Hungary, besides a strong central will.

Co-operations are made difficult not only by the *lack of* the certain *regional and administrative tiers*, because the competencies of the individual institutions can differ even at the same level of hierarchy. Also, in some cases the tasks have not been clearly defined, or the adequate financial or other background is missing. This comes from the fact that in both countries the system of regional development is still shaping. In Romania e.g. the financial and institutional frameworks were completely reformed in 2001 (a new ministry was created), and the amendment of the act on local administration gave the local leaders new responsibilities, also allocated a co-ordinating authority to the prefects, who are the local representatives of the central power.

The cross-border relations of the four NUTS 2 regions along the Hungarian–Romanian border (two in each country) can be significantly influenced by the organisational structure of the given regions. The situation in Hungary is quite simple, because the centre of both the *North Great Plain* and the *South Great Plain* (Hungarian – *Észak-alföldi* and *Dél-alföldi*) region is situated in the vicinity of the border, and four out of the six counties (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád counties) are adjacent to Romania. On the Romanian side, of the four counties of the *Western Region*, two have common borders with Hungary; in addition, the traditional western orientation of the regional centre (Temesvár) can be a guarantee for the deepening of the co-operations. On the other hand, the *North-western Region* has four counties that do not have common borders with Hungary, also, the regional centre is not in a county along the border. The decisions made in Kolozsvár (Cluj Napoca in Romanian), farther from the border, may not necessarily serve the support of the cross-border initiatives, because of the other, inner tasks of the counties making the region; and the promotion of the cross-border co-operations will not be the most important development priority, either.

Since the regions are very young and primarily political formations without real administrative functions, self-governance content and character in both countries, they do not appear as independent executive power factors in the national political life of either country, not to mention the supranational level. This is well demonstrated by the fact that the Euroregions operating along the Hungarian–Romanian border were created not on regional but county grounds, and there are counties in Romania that are part of the border region but not of the Euroregional organisation

– and the opposite occurs, too. It is directly coming from the above-said that no regionalist parties emerged, the organisational–institutional frameworks of self-governance have not been built out, and although the border region experienced several internal and external conflicts deriving from ethnic oppositions in the past century, separatism has not become a typical effort.

The *dominant political parties* consist of those forces on both sides that play a leading role in the national politics, too. At the moment there are four parties in Hungary and five in Romania that have reached the threshold to get into the Parliament, and the representation of the individual regions is the responsibility of the MPs from the electoral districts and the county-level party lists.

When enumerating the possibilities of *interest representation*, the *organisations created on ethnic minority grounds* should always be mentioned. These play a significant role, despite the fact that they are not definitely regional in character, although the Romanian ethnic minority has a higher proportion in Hungary in the border regions. The Romanian ethnic minority, which is negligible in number in Hungary, has a national self-government but no parliamentary representation in Hungary.

The situation is different in *Romania*, because the Hungarian ethnic minority, making 7.1% of the population of Romania, has a representation in the Parliament by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania; in fact, the Alliance was in the government during the 1996–2000 government cycle. This occurred despite the fact that the Alliance is not a political party but an organisation involved in active ethnic minority protection, working on national and democratic grounds, responsible for the public representation of the Hungarian ethnic group living in Romania at national and partly municipal level and for the co-ordination and promotion of the different forms of the self-organisation of the society. In the present government cycle, the Alliance is in the opposition but is supporting the government. Of its 12 senators (8.6% of the possible mandates) five persons, of its 27 representatives in the Lower House (7.8% of the mandates) 13 people are from one of the border regions. In addition to the representation in the Parliament, the Alliance has gained significant positions in the local administration: in four of the 42 Romanian counties (including Szatmár along the border) the president is Hungarian and the representatives of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania have several positions of national importance (Constitutional Court, Government Secretariat etc.)

As regards the participation in the parliamentary and municipal elections, we can say that the electoral activity of the population on both sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border region lags behind the national averages. The data of the last parliamentary elections show that in Hungary Hajdú-Bihar county was the least active (68.4% participation in the elections, as opposed to the national average of 73.5%), in Romania it was Satu Mare (45.2% participation, as opposed to 56.5% on the national average). Both counties are situated right along the border.

1.4 Economic dimension

At the analysis of the economic conditions concerning the Hungarian–Romanian border region, in each case the data of the NUTS 2 level regions with a common border section were considered. This makes practically impossible the demonstration of the data at the direct, narrower border region; however, NUTS 4 level micro-regional data are only available in Hungary, this territorial tier has not been established yet in Romania.

In the countries of this region, no statistical data are published about the progress of the net regional product, and Hungary and Romania are not exceptions, either, thus we used the available national and regional GDP data for the analyses. After the economic decline following the systemic change, GDP started to grow in Hungary in the mid–1990s, increasing from 36.5 billion USD in 1996 to 64.9 billion in 2002. This is not true for Romania, however: during these six years, the amount of gross domestic product did not significantly change, in this field too there is a stagnation.

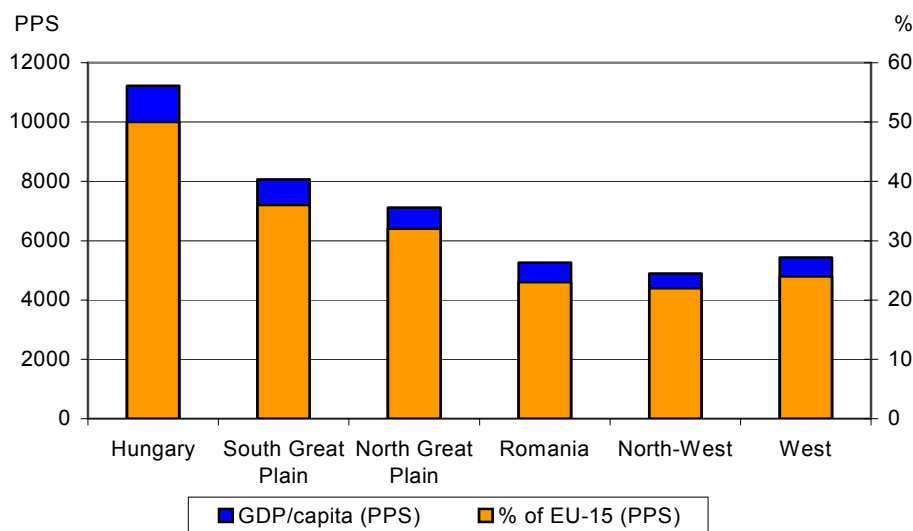
The difference between the two countries is well demonstrated by the figure of *GDP per capita*. As opposed to the figure of Hungary, just over 5,100 USD, there is only a 1,700–1,800 USD figure in Romania. The GDP per capita in the border regions well demonstrates the positions that these regions have within their countries. While in 2001 the GDP per capita was 7,953 and 8,498 Euros in the two Hungarian regions, respectively (as opposed to the national average of 12,018 Euros, in purchasing power parity), in Romania the two border regions had figures of 6,079 and 5,290 Euros, respectively, compared to the national average of 5,700 Euros (*Figure 3*).

The differences between Hungary and Romania can be clearly seen in the *breakdown of the employees by economic sectors*, as well. In the 1990s, the number of *agricultural* employees declined in both Hungarian regions. This decline was especially striking in the first few years of the decade, the process has slowed down since then. Although the share of agricultural earners is still higher in the two Hungarian regions in question than the Hungarian average, it is still significantly lower than in the two neighbouring Romanian border regions (*Table 1*).

As regards the number of *industrial employees*, the effects of the above-mentioned economic restructuring were visible in the labour market. The number of those employed in industry decreased fast, parallel to the decrease in the number of total employment (this is especially true for the South Great Plain region), then it started to rise again after 1998. The only difference in the field of construction industry and trade is that the growth started in these activities a year or two earlier. On the whole, on the Hungarian side of the border 6–7% of the employees work in agriculture, some 30–31% does industrial activities and more than 60% are employed in services.

Figure 3

Gross domestic product, 2001



Source: EUROSTAT.

Table 1

Employment, by activity of national economy (end of year)

Year	Total					
	Hungary	North Great Plain	South Great Plain	Romania	West	North-West
	thou persons					
1992	3,118.6	398.7	375.6	10,458	976.0	1,376.8
1993	2,835.9	348.9	337.2	10,062	942.2	1,337.2
1994	2,619.2	328.2	312.0	10,011	953.9	1,318.8
1995	2,508.3	311.6	308.1	9,493	940.1	1,234.5
1996	2,391.0	299.3	280.5	9,379	914.9	1,231.9
1997	2,337.1	294.3	273.8	9,023	881.4	1,173.9
1998	2,387.1	264.5	245.1	8,813	832.6	1,203.6
1999	2,678.7	295.8	281.8	8,420	780.4	1,147.7
2000	2,703.1	330.9	318.5	8,629	821.1	1,170.0
2001	2,698.1	330.3	311.4	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	2,739.2	339.7	313.3	9,234	803.0	1,164.0
2003	2,700.1	340.7	313.3	8,306	811.0	1,131.4

continuing Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Agriculture, sylviculture, forestry and hunting												
1992	311.2	10.0	62.3	15.6	63.3	16.9	3,443	32.9	296.2	30.3	510.2	37.1
1993	229.3	8.1	41.5	11.9	44.1	13.1	3,614	35.9	301.9	32.0	537.7	40.2
1994	188.2	7.2	31.8	9.7	36.3	11.6	3,647	36.4	304.6	31.9	527.5	40.0
1995	172.2	6.9	31.2	10.0	33.2	10.8	3,265	34.4	282.9	30.1	472.2	38.3
1996	159.2	6.7	28.2	9.4	31.7	11.3	3,320	35.4	284.0	31.0	487.2	39.5
1997	151.8	6.5	27.0	9.2	30.8	11.2	3,384	37.5	283.1	32.1	501.5	42.7
1998	144.7	6.1	27.8	10.5	29.0	11.8	3,349	38.0	282.7	34.0	502.2	41.7
1999	143.7	5.4	27.1	9.2	29.3	10.4	3,466	41.2	286.4	36.7	519.4	45.3
2000	131.4	4.9	23.9	7.2	27.3	8.6	3,570	41.4	294.9	35.9	537.3	45.9
2001	119.6	4.4	21.3	6.4	24.9	8.0	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	113.1	4.1	20.7	6.2	23.6	7.5	3,357	36.3	222.0	27.6	396.0	34.0
2003	106.6	3.9	20.2	5.9	21.9	7.0	2,888	34.8	237.2	29.2	434.2	38.4
Industry												
1992	997.1	32.0	124.0	31.1	125.6	33.5	3,301	31.6	333.0	34.1	421.4	30.6
1993	871.3	30.7	106.5	30.5	111.4	33.1	3,030	30.1	305.1	32.4	395.1	29.5
1994	798.3	30.5	104.0	31.7	103.5	33.2	2,882	28.8	301.2	31.6	363.4	27.6
1995	763.6	30.4	98.9	31.7	104.7	34.0	2,714	28.6	284.5	30.3	347.2	28.1
1996	737.4	30.8	95.5	31.9	93.9	33.5	2,741	29.2	280.8	30.7	350.3	28.4
1997	733.5	31.4	95.8	32.6	91.8	33.5	2,450	27.2	237.4	26.9	312.4	26.6
1998	750.9	31.5	88.1	33.3	83.6	34.1	2,317	26.3	231.5	27.8	317.1	26.3
1999	829.8	31.0	98.6	33.3	93.0	33.0	2,054	24.4	204.3	26.2	272.3	23.7
2000	832.4	30.8	106.5	32.2	106.8	33.6	2,004	23.2	218.9	26.7	259.7	22.2
2001	825.7	30.6	107.8	32.6	101.1	32.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	816.4	29.9	108.7	32.5	99.2	31.6	2,311	25.0	233.0	29.0	321.0	27.6
2003	789.2	29.2	107.1	31.4	96.2	30.7	2,059	24.8	235.1	29.0	287.1	25.4

cont. Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Construction												
1992	147.3	4.7	15.8	4.0	12.6	3.4	579	5.5	48.9	5.0	55.7	4.0
1993	125.9	4.4	12.6	3.6	11.2	3.3	574	5.7	43.1	4.6	51.1	3.8
1994	104.6	4.0	10.1	3.1	9.8	3.2	563	5.6	46.4	4.9	55.2	4.2
1995	92.2	3.7	8.9	2.8	9.7	3.2	479	5.0	44.8	4.8	47.0	3.8
1996	78.7	3.3	7.4	2.5	8.1	2.9	475	5.1	45.2	4.9	49.6	4.0
1997	71.2	3.0	6.7	2.3	7.9	2.9	439	4.9	38.5	4.4	43.8	3.7
1998	81.9	3.4	8.2	3.1	9.6	3.9	391	4.4	37.7	4.5	43.8	3.6
1999	107.3	4.0	11.0	3.7	12.2	4.4	338	4.0	33.5	4.3	38.9	3.4
2000	112.4	4.2	12.1	3.7	12.9	4.1	353	4.1	33.2	4.0	39.4	3.4
2001	116.7	4.3	12.8	3.9	14.0	4.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	118.9	4.3	13.3	4.0	14.5	4.6	413	4.5	43.0	5.4	53.0	4.6
2003	121.5	4.5	13.1	3.9	13.8	4.4	396	4.8	36.1	4.5	40.9	3.6
Trade												
1992	277.4	8.9	35.4	8.9	33.2	8.8	754	7.2	69.6	7.1	92.9	6.7
1993	227.9	8.0	29.0	8.3	26.6	7.9	585	5.8	70.8	7.5	76.9	5.8
1994	189.0	7.2	25.1	7.7	23.3	7.5	636	6.4	81.1	8.5	68.5	5.2
1995	177.8	7.1	20.9	6.7	22.0	7.2	865	9.1	101.8	10.8	95.6	7.7
1996	163.8	6.8	18.6	6.2	18.9	6.8	772	8.2	96.4	10.5	87.3	7.1
1997	154.4	6.6	18.3	6.2	18.0	6.6	802	8.9	129.0	14.6	81.9	7.0
1998	154.2	6.5	18.1	6.8	14.6	6.0	835	9.5	93.2	11.2	106.1	8.8
1999	267.4	10.0	29.6	10.0	28.9	10.3	756	9.0	79.5	10.2	96.1	8.4
2000	283.2	10.5	33.8	10.2	32.5	10.2	776	9.0	85.9	10.5	93.0	7.9
2001	292.3	10.8	34.8	10.5	33.0	10.6	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	306.9	11.2	33.9	10.1	35.0	11.2	859	9.3	90.0	11.2	102.0	8.8
2003	297.1	11.0	32.9	9.7	33.2	10.6	906	10.9	98.4	12.1	120.8	10.7

cont. Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Hotels and restaurants												
1992	64.8	2.1	5.4	1.4	6.4	1.7	175	1.7	15.7	1.6	21.8	1.6
1993	57.7	2.0	5.6	1.6	6.1	1.8	131	1.3	12.9	1.4	17.3	1.3
1994	52.9	2.0	5.3	1.6	5.4	1.7	136	1.4	11.1	1.2	28.2	2.1
1995	50.6	2.0	5.0	1.6	5.2	1.7	123	1.3	15.3	1.6	13.2	1.1
1996	48.5	2.0	4.5	1.5	4.7	1.7	116	1.2	16.5	1.8	13.2	1.1
1997	52.1	2.2	5.5	1.9	4.5	1.6	130	1.4	15.9	1.8	10.8	0.9
1998	53.4	2.2	5.9	2.2	4.4	1.8	98	1.1	11.0	1.3	11.9	1.0
1999	74.0	2.8	8.1	2.7	7.7	2.7	100	1.2	11.0	1.4	11.6	1.0
2000	77.4	2.9	8.6	2.6	8.4	2.6	93	1.1	11.2	1.4	12.1	1.0
2001	77.0	2.9	8.5	2.6	8.0	2.6	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	80.3	2.9	9.2	2.8	8.3	2.7	112	1.2	9.0	1.1	20.0	1.7
2003	76.3	2.8	9.0	2.6	8.0	2.6	105	1.3	11.7	1.4	12.6	1.1
Transport and storage, post and telecommunication												
1992	274.2	8.8	37.6	9.4	26.8	7.1	649	6.2	64.4	6.6	73.6	5.3
1993	266.0	9.4	37.2	10.7	26.7	7.9	592	5.9	59.9	6.4	66.7	5.0
1994	248.2	9.5	34.0	10.4	25.2	8.1	556	5.6	58.3	6.1	61.5	4.7
1995	239.9	9.6	32.3	10.4	25.5	8.3	556	5.9	58.7	6.2	62.4	5.1
1996	228.5	9.6	30.8	10.3	22.4	8.0	547	5.8	52.1	5.7	61.6	5.0
1997	215.5	9.2	29.1	9.9	20.9	7.6	505	5.6	47.7	5.4	55.0	4.7
1998	213.7	9.0	7.8	3.0	7.4	3.0	461	5.2	43.8	5.3	51.1	4.2
1999	226.4	8.5	8.4	2.8	10.2	3.6	405	4.8	39.0	5.0	48.3	4.2
2000	227.7	8.4	27.4	8.3	22.8	7.2	419	4.9	39.0	4.7	49.3	4.2
2001	224.6	8.3	27.1	8.2	27.1	8.7	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	228.9	8.4	28.1	8.4	23.6	7.5	458	5.0	47.0	5.9	56.0	4.8
2003	220.2	8.2	27.3	8.0	22.5	7.2	402	4.8	40.2	5.0	50.6	4.5

cont. Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Other activities of the national economy												
1992	1,046.7	33.6	118.2	29.6	107.7	28.7	1,557	14.9	148.2	15.2	201.2	14.6
1993	1,057.8	37.3	116.4	33.4	111.0	32.9	1,536	15.3	148.5	15.8	192.4	14.4
1994	1,038.0	39.6	117.9	35.9	108.5	34.8	1,591	15.9	151.2	15.9	214.5	16.3
1995	1,011.9	40.3	115.2	37.0	107.6	34.9	1,491	15.7	152.1	16.2	196.9	15.9
1996	974.9	40.8	109.1	36.4	100.9	36.0	1,408	15.0	139.9	15.3	182.7	14.8
1997	958.6	41.0	112.0	38.1	100.1	36.6	1,313	14.6	129.9	14.7	168.5	14.4
1998	988.5	41.4	108.5	41.0	96.5	39.4	1,362	15.5	132.7	15.9	171.4	14.2
1999	1,030.1	38.5	113.0	38.2	100.4	35.7	1,301	15.5	126.7	16.2	161.1	14.0
2000	1,038.7	38.4	118.7	35.9	107.7	33.8	1,414	16.4	138.0	16.8	179.2	15.3
2001	995.8	36.9	118.0	35.7	107.6	34.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	1,070.2	39.1	120.8	36.1	109.3	34.9	1,724	18.7	159.0	19.8	216.0	18.6
2003	1,089.3	40.3	131.1	38.5	117.8	37.6	1,550	18.7	152.3	18.8	185.2	16.4

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

The figures and the transitions since 1998 show a completely different picture in Romania. The proportions of those living from agriculture and forestry are much higher in both regions than in Hungary (in 2002 it was 27.6% in the *Western Region* and 34% in the *North-western Region*). These figures have not decreased considerably since 1990, in fact, in the North-western Region the share of agricultural employees has increased. The share of industrial employment, on the other hand, rapidly decreased, parallel to the decline of the Romanian industry. The number of those working in industry dropped from 30–34% in the early 1990s to 22–26% in 2000, but since that time it has increased again to 27–29% in 2002. Parallel to the decrease in the number of total employment, the number of tertiary employees decreased, too, their share is below 40% in both regions.

Unemployment was an unknown phenomenon in both countries before the systemic change (1989), but became one of the most important social problems within a few years. The comprehension of unemployment data are made difficult by the fact that sometimes there are different calculation methods within the same country, and there has been a discussion for a long time about the selection of the method most adequately reflecting the real situation. In Hungary, the national un-

employment figures reached their peak in 1993, at approximately 12%, since then this number has been continuously decreasing, making approximately 8% now (Table 2). The *North Great Plain Region* is also in an unfavourable situation, as opposed to the major part of Hungary, the decrease in the number of the unemployed did not start in 1993, the situation only improved after 1998. The present unemployment rate in the counties of the North Great Plain ranges from 6 to 9%. The South Great Plain region is in a better situation, as regards the unemployment rate, it followed the national tendencies. Now it has the best position along the eastern border, in Csongrád county the unemployment rate is even lower than the national average.

In *Romania*, unemployment appeared a little later than in Hungary, but the pace of the growth in the number of the unemployed was faster, the number of jobless people multiplied from 1991 to 1992. Looking at the western border region of Romania, it is more difficult to find evident tendencies. Following the peak in 1993, when unemployment rate was around 10%, a decrease could be seen for a few years, but a new and even stronger wave of unemployment hit the region after 1997. By 2003 the number of unemployed decreased again, the proportion of the registered unemployed is around 6% in the Western and the North-western Region (Figure 4).

Table 2

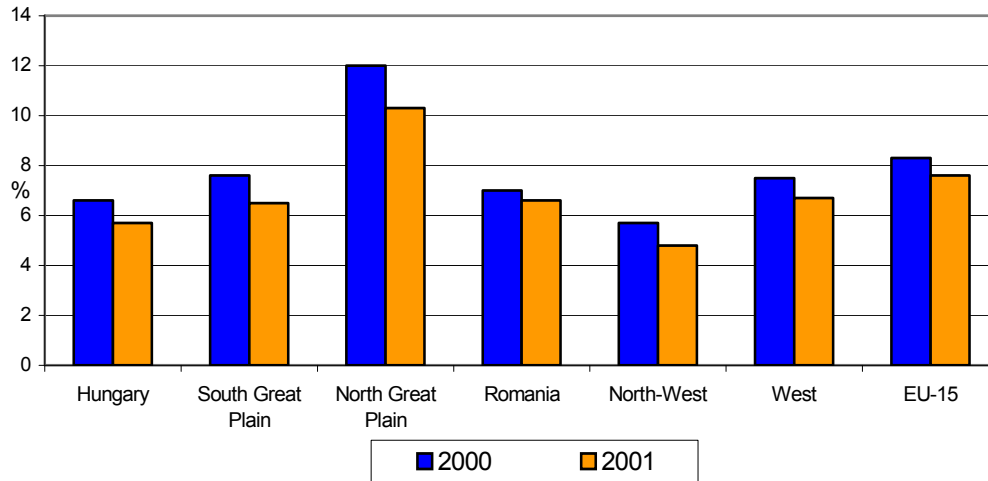
*Unemployment rate, based on the number of registered unemployed,
 1992–2003*

Year	Unemployment rate (%)					
	Hungary	South Great Plain	North Great Plain	Romania	North-West	West
1992	12.3	14.6	18.1	8.2	8.9	6.8
1993	12.1	13.7	17.1	10.4	9.8	8.8
1994	10.4	11.7	15.8	10.9	10.1	9.2
1995	10.4	10.6	15.7	9.5	8.6	7.5
1996	10.5	10.8	16.5	6.6	5.6	5.9
1997	10.4	11.1	16.5	8.9	8.1	8.3
1998	9.1	9.7	14.5	10.4	8.8	10.6
1999	9.6	10.5	16.3	11.8	10.0	12.6
2000	8.9	9.9	15.6	10.5	8.5	10.4
2001	8.0	9.2	13.7	8.8	6.6	5.6
2002	5.8	6.2	7.8	8.1	7.6	7.1
2003	5.9	6.5	6.8	7.2	6.0	5.9

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Agency for Employment (Romania).

Figure 4

Unemployment rate (ILO standard, end of year)



Source: EUROSTAT.

Figures regarding *foreign direct investments* are only available for the Hungarian regions. There are significant differences in this respect between the two Hungarian regions of the Great Hungarian Plain, the Northern Great Plain region attracted less investors during the 1990s than its southern counterpart. The differences almost completely vanished by 2001, moreover later the Northern Great Plain region attracted a lot more foreign capital. The amount of the registered capital of the businesses gradually increased over the last ten years, a stop in this growth only occurred in the recent years. The registered capital of the foreign-owned businesses amounted to approximately 434.7 billion Forints in the North Great Plain and some 203.7 billion in the South Great Plain region in 2003.

A relatively little volume of capital has arrived at the two regions from the neighbouring country, because the major part of the Romanian capital (a total of 30 million USD until the end of the year 2000, only one-sixth of the Hungarian capital export to Romania) went to Budapest. The main reason for this is the fact that there is no significant Romanian minority along the border (e.g. the language problems are already there), so the Romanian companies prefer the Hungarian capital city or the western part of Hungary, considering them as a good “springboard” towards the European Union.

In Romania, the *foreign direct investments* are characterised by a *spatial concentration* both as regards the number of the companies and their registered capital: the share of *Bucharest* is almost 60% in both respects. The lagging of the rest of the country is well indicated by the fact that in the four Romanian counties (Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș) adjacent to Hungary, which are otherwise among the most developed territories, the total volume of the investments is significantly lower than in the Hungarian counties (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád), which are peripheral territories by Hungarian standards. The *inflow of Hungarian capital into Romania* mostly favours the Hungarian-inhabited regions, the *four Romanian counties along the state border* and the *inner Transylvanian territories* (Cluj, Covasna, Mures and Harghita), and Bucharest, which stands out as an island with a high share from the investments. Understandably, several factors contribute to the promotion of the Hungarian investments, including the fostering of traditions, the use of Hungarian language and the assistance of the population torn from the mother country all explain why the Hungarian capital investments are implemented in the mostly or significantly Hungarian-inhabited regions, along the border and in the inner Transylvanian counties.

At the end of the year 2000, there were some 3,500 *Hungarian businesses* with a total capital of 180 million USD in Romania (this means that Hungary has the 7th position among the foreign investors in Romania and 12th position as regards the volume of the invested capital). The businesses *usually prefer the Hungarian-inhabited territories* instead of the Romanian-inhabited ones. The main reason for this, apart from the language problems, is the large distance and the backward infrastructure. The Hungarian businesses are mainly interested in the counties along the border (Szatmár, Bihar, Arad and Timiș) and the inner Transylvanian territories, including the ones in the Székely Land (Harghita, Covasna). It is also characteristic that while 33% of the companies operate in the border region, “only” 23.5% of them are located in the Székely Land, while their share from the amount of invested capital is 11.1% and 25.5%, respectively. The Hungarian companies investing in the direct border region are less capital-intensive: the average amount of their capital is not more than one-fourth of their non-Hungarian counterparts. When looking at these data, however, we cannot neglect the fact that the MOL (the Hungarian oil and gas company), which is responsible for almost a half of the total Hungarian investments in Romania, operates most of its filling stations in Bucharest and the Székely Land.

The borders opening up after the systemic change offered new possibilities for the citizens who wish to live on *tourism*, even if the biggest part of *Hungary's eastern border region* is not among the most popular tourist destinations. The rapid increase in the number of commercial accommodations shows that the local people are trying to use the new opportunities. Within a few years, the number of

beds in commercial accommodations increased by several thousand, reaching 39,500 in the *North Great Plain Region*.

On the other hand, in *Romania* the statistics show stagnation, in the case of the *Western Region* even a decline in the number of beds in commercial accommodations. Despite the growing number of beds in commercial accommodations, a decrease in the number of foreign guests can be seen on both sides of the border, which is more drastic in Romania and moderate in Hungary. Nevertheless the North Great Plain region can be qualified as definitely successful for being able to increase the number of guests nights since 1995, besides a decreasing number of guests. In the remaining part of the border region, however, the role of tourism in income-generation is decreasing.

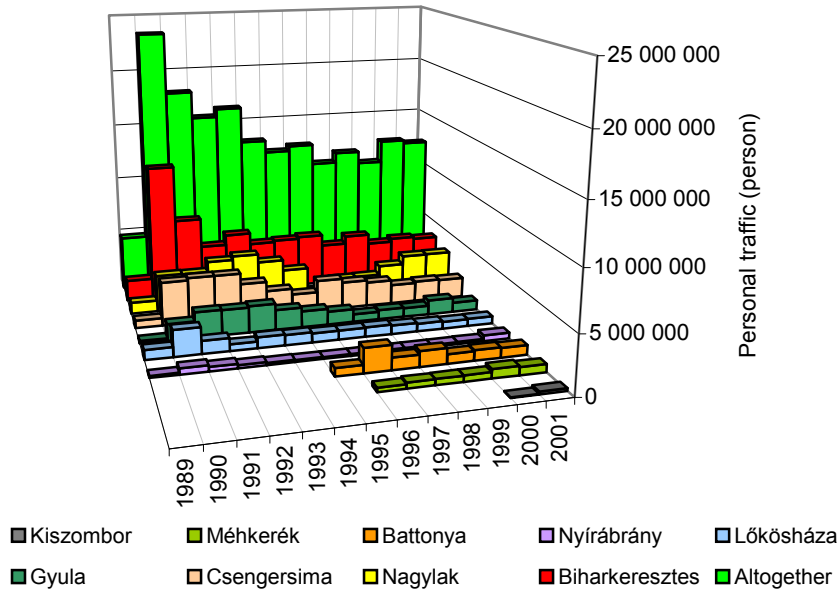
The total *passenger traffic across the Hungarian–Romanian border* mostly adapted to the national trends over the last decade, although special characteristics could be seen as well. The systemic change resulted in the complete opening of the borders, amounting to a sudden growth in the traffic of all border sections. This reached its peak in 1995, after a gradual increase (in 1995, 115,138,000 border crossings were registered). Since then there has been a continuous decline, which is the result of a natural balancing process, and according to experts the traffic will stabilise around the present 80–90 million border crossings (*Figure 5*).

In addition to following the national trends, the most important regional characteristics is the fact that the *Hungarian–Romanian border* was the busiest in 1990 and not 1995, because of the inner political events in Romania. The average daily number of vehicles has been some 8–10% of the total figure for Hungary over the last few years, while this figure was 19.5% in 1990, due to the large number of refugees. In the following five years, however, the traffic continuously decreased and dropped by almost a half. Since then the size of the traffic has more or less stabilised, besides some ups and downs. If unpredictable political events or economic reasons do not occur, a similar traffic is expected in the coming years. The volume of passenger traffic is unlikely to decrease after the introduction of the Schengen norms of border defence, either, because the right of the Romanian citizens to travel without visa, gained not so long ago, will remain.

At the border crossing stations of the Hungarian–Romanian border, a total of 12,179,982 border crossings were registered in 2001. The majority of the traffic was managed by the Biharkeresztes–Ártánd, the Nagylak, the Csengersima and the Gyula border crossing stations. The temporarily working bilateral border crossings, although they have a great significance locally and in the time of holidays, did not produce a considerable traffic in 2001, similar to the years before: not more than 3,048 persons were registered crossing the border. The overwhelming majority of the total traffic was made by the journeys of the Romanian citizens, a lesser part by those of the Hungarians, while the citizens of other countries together did not reach 20%.

Figure 5

Personal traffic across the checkpoints of the Hungarian–Romanian border, 1989–2001



Source: Hungarian National Headquarters of the Hungarian Border Guard, 2001. Edited by the authors.

Similar to the previous years, the motivation of a significant part of the cross-border traffic was the *difference in some of the market prices* in the two countries. The main attraction for the Hungarian citizens living in the border region is still the cheap fuel in Romania (there are so-called “*petrol tourists*” specialised on this). The main motivation of the Romanian shopping tourism is the procurement of food, technical devices and other consumer goods. Some special sales promotions can thus significantly influence the number of tourists with shopping purposes. In the recent years, however, a gradual equalisation occurred in the price levels in the two countries, and although the “confirmed” marketers go on regularly visiting the neighbouring country, the number of border crossings with shopping purposes is gradually decreasing. Those living in the direct vicinity of the border still visit the other country with *shopping* intentions, but this makes an ever smaller share of the total traffic, due to the decreasing differences between the price levels in the two countries.

From March to October, i.e. the period of the seasonal agricultural, food processing and construction industry works and in the peak of the tourism season, the number of Romanian citizens arriving at Hungary for *employment reasons* is still high. Following the recent abolishment of the obligator visa for the Romanian citizens, a new phenomenon has appeared: more and more buses full of Romanian tourists cross the Hungarian–Romanian border, designating some European Union country as a destination, however, the motivation might as well be employment in Hungary – of course we do not have information about the real intentions.

On the whole we can say that practically the same problems have to be tackled on the two sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border, although there are *huge differences between the level of development of the Hungarian and the Romanian side* in many respects. Although the *most serious problems are the same* (outdated economic structure and infrastructure, little interest of the foreign capital, lack of capital), still the possibilities are completely different on the two sides of the border, because of the enormous development advance of Hungary. This makes co-operation difficult and at the same time inevitable. An interesting feature of the geographical location of *Satu Mare (Szatmár), Bihor (Bihar), Arad and Timiș (Temes) counties on the Romanian side the Hungarian–Romanian border* is the fact that they are twice as far from their own capital city as from Budapest, which is another factor calling for the development of the cross-border connections. Because of the common interests and the willingness of the Romanian party for a more intensive co-operation in order to achieve a successful socio-economic catching up and the Euro-Atlantic integration, there is a justified expectancy on both sides.

1.5 Social dimension

Similar to the general characteristics of the European *demographic trends*, the number of population has been continuously decreasing in Hungary since the census of 1980. As regards regional differences in this respect, we can say that the number of population in the South Great Plain has decreased, in accordance with the national tendencies, whereas it increased in the North Great Plain region until 1992 (due to the high natural increase) and the decrease only started in 1992. In Romania, including the Western and North-western Region neighbour to Hungary, the number of population reached its highest figure in 1990, since then the decrease has been continuous (*Table 3*).

In Hungary, the figures of *natural increase* have been negative since 1982, but there are significant differences in this respect between the two Hungarian regions in question: while the balance of births and deaths was positive in the North Great

TABLE 3

Population and population density, 1988–2003

Plain region until 1992, the South Great Plain has been characterised by a natural decrease for more than two decades now. In Romania natural decrease started in 1992, in the same year in the North-western Region and only one year earlier in the Western Region. The slowing down of the pace of natural increase started in 1996 in the Western Region and in 1998 in the North-western Region (*Table 4*).

Table 4

Natural increase per 1,000 inhabitants, 1988–2003

Year	Natural increase (‰)					
	Hungary	South Great Plain	North Great Plain	Romania	North-West	West
1988	-1.5	-2.48	1.24	5.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1989	-2.1	-2.59	0.61	5.3	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1990	-1.9	-3.03	1.08	3.0	3.13	0.09
1991	-1.7	-2.32	0.82	1.0	1.33	-1.19
1992	-2.6	-3.56	-0.12	-0.2	-0.33	-2.57
1993	-3.2	-3.91	-0.89	-0.6	-1.11	-2.71
1994	-3.0	-3.78	-0.69	-0.8	-1.09	-2.91
1995	-3.3	-4.37	-0.48	-1.6	-1.65	-3.57
1996	-3.7	-4.69	-1.00	-2.5	-2.09	-4.16
1997	-3.8	-5.14	-1.16	-1.9	-2.06	-3.50
1998	-4.3	-5.73	-1.89	-1.5	-1.57	-3.27
1999	-4.8	-6.05	-2.52	-1.4	-1.65	-3.24
2000	-3.8	-5.00	-1.78	-0.9	-1.30	-2.90
2001	-3.5	-4.51	-1.71	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	-3.5	-4.60	-1.98	-2.7	-2.80	-4.00
2003	-4.1	-5.38	-2.69	-2.5	-4.00	-2.40

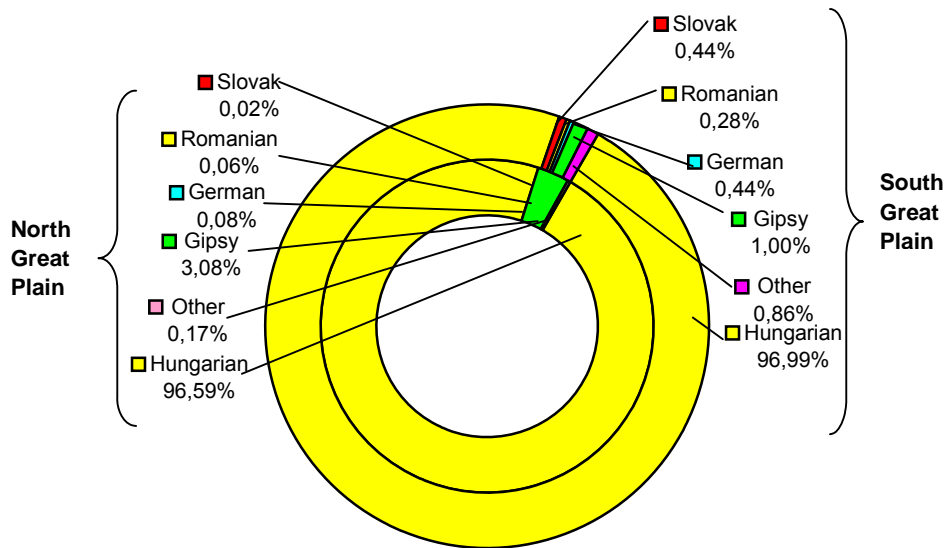
Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Just like the whole of Hungary, the North Great Plain and the South Great Plain regions can be regarded as almost completely homogeneous as regards ethnic composition. The definition of the Gypsies from ethnic aspect is problematic, because the Gypsies do not make a single ethnic group, only estimated data are available about their number and the majority of them declare themselves as Hungarians. In both Hungarian border regions in question, a rather scattered Slovak, Romanian and German ethnic minority live in the largest number (*Figure 6*). The number of Romanians living in Hungary is approximately 15,000–25,000 people, some 60–75% of them live along the border, mostly in Békés and Hajdú-Bihar counties, and another significant group of them in Budapest. The village called Méhkerék (in

Békés county) is the only settlement in Hungary where the census data show a Romanian majority (80.7%). The Romanian minority has wide-ranging cultural autonomy in Hungary (minority self-government, newspaper and television programme in their mother tongue, cultural organisations, elementary and secondary education). Their most important organisation is the Cultural Alliance of Romanians in Hungary, but the Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches have a significant role in the preservation of the ethnic identity, too. In the border region, 19 Romanian Orthodox and three Greek Catholic parishes operate, together with one Romanian Orthodox episcopacy.

Figure 6

Ethnic composition of population in North and South Great Plain, 2001



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

In Romania, the share of the Romanian ethnic population from the total population was almost 90% both in 1992 and in 2001. The most significant ethnic minority are the Hungarians, whose proportion decreased from 7.1% to 6.6%, their number from 1,620,000 to 1,480,000 from 1992 to 2001. In addition to the Gypsies who are hard to classify, there is no other ethnic minority apart from the Hungarians in Romania whose share from the total population reaches 1%. A characteristic feature of the Hungarian ethnic group living in Romania is that only

a part of them concentrate in the proximity of the Hungarian–Romanian border. The biggest contiguous ethnic block can be found in the inner part of Romania, in the Székely Land. Another larger contiguous Hungarian-inhabited territory can be found in the northern part of the Hungarian–Romanian border, whereas the Hungarian population is only sporadic now along the southern part of the border (Figure 7).

In the preservation of the ethnic identity of the Hungarians living in Romania, the non-governmental organisations play an important role. Their number started to increase rapidly after the fall of the dictatorship in Romania: in 2002, as many as 1,500 Hungarian non-governmental organisations were registered in the country, whose main field of operation is education and culture, also the knowledge of Hungary and tourism. The number of associations of economic character is significant, too.

As regards *migration processes*, the Hungarian border regions have been characterised by a migration loss for decades, the major part of that being internal migration, towards to economically more advanced Hungarian territories, the number of those leaving Hungary is negligible. In the Hungarian regions along the Hungarian–Romanian border, the combined share of foreign citizens of any nationality is less than 1% from the total population. Most of them are immigrants (38%) and Hungarians moving back to Hungary (23%). In Romania there are only national level data, which show that the main actors in the international migrations, apart from the Romanians, have been the Hungarian and the German minority since 1990. As regards the destinations of the migrations, a considerable change occurred during the last decade, the emigration from political and ethnic reasons in the early 1990s was replaced by a migration because of economic reasons (Table 5, 6).

In Hungary the *density of the population* has been continuously decreasing, parallel to the decline of the number of population (the population density was 109.4 persons per km² in 2001). Both the North Great Plain and the South Great Plain regions are much less densely populated than Hungary as a whole (75 and 87.8 people per km², respectively in 2001). The population density has been continuously decreasing in Romania, too, including the two border regions neighbour to Hungary, which are much more scarcely populated than the national average (Table 3). The *share of the urban population* was continuously increasing in Hungary until 1994, since then it has only grown moderately with some ups and downs, mostly due to the settlements newly awarded the town status. The North Great Plain region is less, while the South Great Plain more urbanised than the national average, and since 1988 the proportion of urban population has been continuously increasing in both regions. In Romania, the share of urban population increased by 5.2% in 1988–2000, with some ups and downs, but a moderate decrease has occurred since 1998. The share of urban population is stagnating in the border regions (Table 7).

FIGURE 7

HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA, 2001

Table 5

*Emigrants by nationality and country of destination in Romania,
 1990–2000*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Emigrants by nationality / ethnic group (number of persons)											
<i>Total</i>	96,929	44,160	31,152	18,446	17,146	25,675	21,526	19,945	17,536	12,594	14,753
Romanians	23,888	19,307	18,104	8,814	10,146	18,706	16,767	16,883	15,202	11,283	13,438
Germans	60,072	15,567	8,852	5,945	4,065	2,906	2,315	1,273	775	390	374
Hungarians	11,040	7,494	3,523	3,206	2,509	3,608	2,105	1,459	1,217	696	788
Jews	745	516	224	221	177	131	191	136	198	111	66
Other nationalities	1,184	1,276	449	260	249	324	148	194	144	114	87
Emigrants by country of destination (number of persons)											
Australia	611	301	297	236	220	136	165	207	206	124	143
Austria	3,459	4,630	3,282	1,296	1,256	2,276	915	1,551	941	468	270
Canada	1,894	1,661	1,591	1,926	1,523	2,286	2,123	2,331	1,945	1,626	2,518
France	1,626	1,512	1,235	937	787	1,438	2,181	1,143	846	696	809
Germany	66,121	20,001	13,813	6,874	6,890	9,010	6,467	5,807	3,899	2,370	2,216
Greece	576	354	143	80	87	193	274	232	316	214	328
Hungary	10,635	4,427	4,726	3,647	1,779	2,509	1,485	1,244	1,306	774	881
Israel	1,227	519	463	324	417	316	418	554	563	326	433
Italy	1,130	1,396	528	645	1,580	2,195	1,640	1,706	1,877	1,415	2,142
Sweden	996	381	686	199	176	520	310	468	129	98	90
U.S.A.	4,924	5,770	2,100	1,245	1,078	2,292	3,181	2,861	2,868	2,386	2,723
Other countries	3,730	3,208	2,288	1,010	1,363	2,504	2,367	1,841	2,640	2,097	2,200

Source: National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Table 6

Repatriated by nationality and country from where they repatriated in Romania, 1990–2000

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Repatriated by nationality / ethnic group (number of persons)											
<i>Total</i>	3,095	3,443	3,077	3,257	3,304	5,507	6,265	8,432	11,287	10,467	12,442
Romanians	2,139	2,544	2,255	2,296	2,428	4,604	5,332	7,288	10,289	9,823	12,138
Germans	177	116	106	139	146	196	225	268	248	141	40
Hungarians	290	283	185	284	267	259	311	361	355	202	176
Jews	172	154	198	200	129	76	0	144	85	72	42
Other nationalities	317	346	333	338	334	372	397	371	310	229	46
Repatriated by country from where they arrived (number of persons)											
Austria	160	142	121	215	323	569	567	455	198	113	20
France	164	240	191	229	137	670	1,075	1,159	328	139	111
Germany	531	556	579	606	673	853	764	692	422	273	242
Greece	162	182	106	150	101	256	117	396	394	235	178
Israel	264	254	273	259	165	162	211	151	300	83	61
Republic of Moldova	18	12	128	195	122	1,171	1,752	4,092	8,109	8,359	10,365
U.S.A.	409	433	448	348	329	487	420	441	259	255	172
Other countries	1,387	1,624	1,231	1,255	1,454	1,339	1,359	1,046	1,277	1,010	1,293

Source: National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Table 7

Population by area, 1988–2003

Year	Population by area (as percentage of total)											
	Hungary		South Great Plain		North Great Plain		Romania		North-West		West	
	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
1988	59.4	40.6	56.1	43.9	49.4	50.6	51.9	48.1	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1989	61.9	38.1	61.5	38.5	54.8	45.2	53.2	46.8	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1990	62.0	38.0	61.6	38.4	55.1	44.9	54.3	45.7	51.6	48.4	62.7	37.3
1991	62.3	37.7	61.8	38.2	55.9	44.1	54.1	45.9	51.6	48.4	62.4	37.6
1992	62.7	37.3	62.1	37.9	58.3	41.7	54.3	45.7	51.6	48.4	61.6	38.4
1993	63.2	36.8	62.2	37.8	60.0	40.0	54.5	45.5	51.9	48.1	61.8	38.2
1994	62.8	37.2	64.3	35.7	60.0	40.0	54.7	45.3	52.2	47.8	61.9	38.1
1995	62.6	37.4	64.2	35.8	60.0	40.0	54.9	45.1	52.5	47.5	62.6	37.4
1996	63.6	36.4	64.6	35.4	60.0	40.0	54.9	45.1	52.6	47.4	62.5	37.5
1997	62.9	37.1	65.0	35.0	60.2	39.8	55.0	45.0	52.7	47.3	62.6	37.4
1998	63.5	36.5	65.6	34.4	61.0	39.0	54.9	45.1	52.7	47.3	62.2	37.8
1999	63.3	36.7	65.6	34.4	60.9	39.1	54.8	45.2	52.7	47.3	62.3	37.7
2000	63.6	35.4	65.6	34.4	61.0	39.0	54.6	45.4	52.6	47.4	62.2	37.8
2001	64.1	35.9	66.8	33.2	61.9	38.1	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	65.0	35.0	67.7	33.3	62.9	37.1	53.3	46.7	51.1	48.9	61.7	38.3
2003	64.8	35.2	67.8	32.2	62.7	37.3	53.4	46.6	51.2	48.8	61.7	38.3

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

One of the most critical aspects of the judgement of the socio-political changes taking place in 1989–1990 is the *increase of the number of crimes* in the Eastern European societies. In each county the population was shocked by the fact that after the former relative security they had to get used to the relatively high number of crimes. Comparing the Hungarian and the Romania border regions, we can see that the number of crimes increased in both regions, but in Hungary the number of crimes almost doubled, slowly from an originally relatively high level, whereas in Romania the number of known crimes increased from an extremely low level (which was a “by-product” of the dictatorship) by almost fivefold within a short time.

It is difficult to compare the *school education* of the population, because of the differences in the collection of statistical data and in the educational systems (different length and forms of education). In general we can say that both nationally and in the border regions more than 90% of the population in the adequate age

have at least primary school education and the share of those with secondary or higher education is dynamically growing in both countries. In the Hungarian–Romanian border the number of secondary and higher education institutions is acceptable, several institutions with great traditions can be found here, but especially in Romania the equipment of the institutions and the subjects taught do not always meet the requirements.

The conditions of the use of *social and cultural services* changed a lot in the border regions during the 1990s. As a result of the detrimental effects of the economic transition, the inhabitants are only able to spend a smaller part of their incomes on culture, on the one hand; on the other, the institutions offering socio-cultural services themselves face financial problems (the physical condition of the buildings is bad, their technical equipment is outdated, some of them have been closed down). In addition, the expansion of the home entertainment facilities (television, VCR or DVD, Internet) contributes to the decreasing use of the capacity of the cultural institutions. Consequently, the popularity of these institutions has decreased in both countries.

Maybe the *health services* are the field where the most significant differences can be seen between the conditions in Hungary and Romania, as regards the social dimension. Looking at the number of hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants and the number of population per one general practitioner, a decline could be seen in the border regions of both countries after 1990, but these indices are still much higher in Romania than in Hungary (*Table 8*). This is due to the fact that in Romania the rationalisation of the health care system is still to be done (as an effect of the paternalistic supply system inherited from the socialism), the better quantitative indices hide considerable qualitative problems.

2 Hungarian–Ukrainian border region

2.1 Historical–geographical dimension

The *regions along* the present *Hungarian–Ukrainian border* made a single organic unit for centuries, as part of the historical Hungary. The Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, a loser of World War I, fell into pieces in 1918–1919, and the formerly born nationalist movements strengthened. All the borders of Hungary were designated by the peace treaty signed in France, in Trianon (nearby Versailles) on 4 June 1920. When designating the borders in the region, the ethnic, economic and catchment area aspects were completely neglected, the most important aspect of the designation of the borderlines was infrastructure, within that especially outer railway line running connecting the market towns. As a consequence of this, a signifi-

cant number of Hungarian minority remained in the Transcarpathia, and the hostile relations after the war made it impossible for the towns detached from Hungary (Ungvár, Beregszász, Munkács) and their hinterlands, which remained in Hungary and lost their gravity centres. This territory had always been a periphery from socio-economic aspect within the historical Hungary, and now it was cut by a border, which put it into an even more difficult situation, the new border regions became the “peripheries of the periphery”.

Table 8

Hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, 1990–2003

Year	Hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants					
	Hungary	South Great Plain	North Great Plain	Romania	North-West	West
1990	98.5	86.4	81.7	89.2	95.9	106.0
1991	100.7	86.1	81.1	89.2	96.0	107.0
1992	98.7	83.8	79.9	78.5	83.3	97.0
1993	97.7	84.5	79.5	78.7	83.5	96.6
1994	96.1	83.9	79.9	76.9	81.8	93.7
1995	90.7	83.0	74.2	76.7	82.7	94.8
1996	89.9	81.5	74.4	75.6	82.1	96.0
1997	82.4	75.0	73.0	73.8	81.3	94.1
1998	83.0	76.0	73.0	73.1	81.5	92.5
1999	84.0	76.0	75.0	73.1	81.2	92.5
2000	83.0	76.0	74.0	74.4	82.5	89.1
2001	79.1	71.8	74.3	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	79.2	72.3	71.8	75.0	84.4	82.7
2003	78.9	71.8	72.3	65.7	72.2	73.1

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Although the regional borders did not change considerably since they were designated, the territories cut from Hungary and now belonging to The Ukraine have experienced several changes. Due to the changes of the borders, the inhabitants of the Transcarpathia were the citizens of five states in the 20th century without moving from their birth of place. There is a frequently told anecdote in which an old man in the Transcarpathia is asked how many places he has visited in his life. He answers he has been to the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, Czechoslovakia, the kingdom of Hungary, the Soviet Union and The Ukraine. When he is told that he must be a great traveller, he answers he has never moved out from his village.

Transcarpathia county on the Ukrainian side of the *Hungarian–Ukrainian border region* is situated in the south-western part of The Ukraine. It has a territory of 12,800 km²-s, the southern slopes of the so-called Forested Carpathians (Ukrainian Carpathians by their new name) are in this county, and the Great Plain begins at the foot of these hills. The neighbours of Transcarpathia are Lemberg (Lvov) and Ivano-Frankovsk counties from the north-east, Romania and Hungary on the south, Slovakia and Poland on the west. The official name of the Transcarpathia administrative area is the Trans-Carpathian Territory (Zakarpatskaya oblast), which is divided into 13 districts. The Transcarpathia region is not a separate geographical entity. The specification itself was used from the 1930s, until then the areas had been called the eastern part of Upper Northern Hungary, as Rusinsko or Podkarpatskaya Rus. Transcarpathia in the present sense became a reality only in 1944, when during the Soviet occupation a part of almost 13,000 km²-s were cut from Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros counties, and this territory was named Zakarpatskaya Ukraina, a year later Trans-Carpathian Territory. We have to mention, however, that practically the same area also belonged to Czechoslovakia after World War I, under the name Podkarpastka Rus, as determined by the Treaty of Trianon.

The designation of the borders in Trianon also affected the administrative system of the Hungarian side, of course, because the mutilated counties remaining in Hungary without their gravity centres were not viable on their own. After a rather chaotic transitory period between the two world wars, the unification of the remaining parts of the former counties took place in 1949–1950. This reformed administrative system is still functioning, but the *planning and statistical regions* have also been designated, in accordance with the expectations of the European Union. The (NUTS 2 level) *North Great Plain (Hungarian – Észak-Alföldi) Region*, neighbour to The Ukraine, consists of three counties: *Hajdú-Bihar*, *Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok* and *Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg*. The territory and number of population are of approximately the same magnitude as in the neighbouring Transcarpathia, although they are not the same administrative tier (*Figure 8*).

In the cross-border relations of two neighbouring states, the *permeability of the borders* plays a dominant role. It is important whether the border has a *connecting (bridge)* or the *separating (wall)* function. The Hungarian–Ukrainian (formerly Hungarian–Czechoslovakian, then Hungarian–Soviet) border has always been one of the most closed borders since it was designated in 1920. Following the division of Hungary after World War I, the relation between the successor states was rather hostile; the “wall” role was dominant. From 1944, this border section was the western gate of the Soviet Union, where the Soviets made their best not to let the tiniest part of the Western culture leak into the Soviet Union. In the socialist times, an alarm system was constructed on the Ukrainian side of the border. It is still there, although not used anymore. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990, the crossing of the border was simplified, but the approaching European Union membership of

Hungary and the concomitant introduction of the Schengen norms already raise a new problem. One thing seems to be certain: the Hungarian–Ukrainian border will be for a long time an external and strictly defended border of the European Union, which will restrict the everyday cross-border relations.

Figure 8

The Hungarian–Ukrainian border region



Source: Edited by the authors. CRS of HAS Debrecen Department.

2.2 Legal dimensions

The Peace Treaty of Trianon of 1920 (Part 2., § 27.) designated the new borders of Hungary. The Transcarpathia region, now part of The Ukraine, belonged to Czechoslovakia then, then it became the part of Hungary again in 1939. As a conclusion of World War II, the line of the new state borders were designated by Hun-

gary and the Allied and Associated Powers in the Peace Treaty signed in Paris on 10 February 1947. This treaty was complemented by the different re-demarcation documents signed in 1949 by the Republic of Hungary and the Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics and then by the decree of legal force on the order of the state border, which came into effect in 1962.

At the end of the 1980s, the political easing, the decreasing influence and then the disintegration of the Soviet Union had a fundamental effect on the borders and the border traffic. Hungary was one of the first countries to recognise the sovereignty of The Ukraine, gained in 1991 – before the disintegration of the Soviet Union –, but the establishment of the good neighbourhood and trustful relations had already started before that, and the diplomatic relations were officially established on 3 December 1991. The Hungarian consulate in Kyiv became an Embassy, and The Ukraine also opened its Embassy in Budapest on 26 March 1992. The Hungarian representative office opened in Ungvár on 8 August 1991 was given the chief consulate status on 2 June 1993. As one of the first steps in the establishment of the relations, the ministers of foreign affairs of Hungary and The Ukraine signed a declaration on 31 May 1991 on the protection of the rights of the minorities, followed later by the signing of border agreements (*Annex 1*).

Annex 1

The agreements concerning the Hungarian–Ukrainian border

- The agreement and its annexes between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Hungary and the Ministry of Transport Affairs of the Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics on the railway border traffic, signed in Moscow on 15 September 1947.
- The agreement between the Government of the People’s Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics on the common use and maintenance of the road bridge over the Tisza River at Záhony–Csop, signed in Budapest on 11 June 1963.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the border crossing stations on the border between the two states, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the handing over and reception of persons over the common state border, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993 Act (No. XXIV. of 1995).
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the simplified state border crossing procedure of the inhabitants of the counties along the border, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993.

- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on water management issues concerning the border rivers, signed in Budapest on 28 July 1993 [Government Decree No. 120/1994 (8 September)].
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the implementation of the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the handing over and reception of persons over the common state border, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993 Act (No. XXIV. of 1995), signed in Kyiv on 27 October 1994.
- The agreement between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine on the order of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, the co-operation in issues concerning the border and mutual assistance, signed in Kyiv 19 on May 1995.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the co-operation in fighting organised crime, signed in Kyiv 19 on May 1995.
- The Contract between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine on the order of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, the co-operation in issues concerning the border and mutual assistance, signed in Kyiv 19 on May 1995. Announced: Act No. LV of 1998.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the rail traffic over the state border, signed in Kv on 19 May 1995. Announced: Government Decree No. 176/1996 (29 November).
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the reconstruction of the road bridge over the Tisza river at the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, signed in Budapest on 16 January 1996. Announced: Government Decree No. 132/1996 (28 August).

Apart from the concrete border contracts, the most important document concerning the Hungarian–Ukrainian border is the *Treaty* (whole name: “Treaty on the grounds of good neighbourhood and co-operation between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine”), signed by the two parties in Kyiv on 6 December 1991, ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament in 1992 and by the Hungarian Parliament in 1993. In the Treaty contract the parties declare, among other things, that the possible disputes between them will only be solved by peaceful means, they will never use their armed forces against each other in any case, they respect each other’s territorial integrity, and state that they do not and will not have territorial claims from the other party. The agreement also states that the parties will promote the cross-border co-operations in all fields, they do their best to create the conditions for the approach of their peoples on the ground of good neighbourhood and friendship,

they use all means to promote the expansion of the relationships among their citizens both at the level of the individuals and the level of the state, social and other organisations. They assist the establishment of the conditions for the expansion of the relationships and co-operation among the social organisations, trade unions, foundations, educational and cultural institutions, scientific institutes and mass communication, and for the intensification of the youth exchange programmes. They give a special attention to the development of the mutually advantageous bilateral economic relations.

In addition to the above-said, a number of interstate and intergovernmental agreements and contracts regulate the relations between the two countries. Agreements were signed, among other things, on the *co-operation in the field of trade and economy, technical and scientific issues, education and culture, the promotion and mutual protection of the investments between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine, plant sanitation and plant protection relations, international air, railway and road traffic*. Also, there are agreements on the co-operation in the field of energy management, the *avoidance of double taxation, the co-operation in the field of environmental protection and regional development, the assistance in customs affairs* etc. Also, a number of Hungarian–Ukrainian intergovernmental joint committees have been set up, which co-ordinate the bilateral co-operations in their fields, prepare and supervise the bilateral agreements. There is e.g. a joint committee on trade and economic issues, one on technical and scientific issues, on environmental protection and regional development co-operation, another on minority issues.

Although it is not a bilateral agreement, we have to mention the *Act No. LXII of 2001*, commonly known as the “*Status Law*”, on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries, which gives special (health care, travel, employment etc.) allowances to the Hungarians living outside Hungary.

The negotiations in connection with the EU accession are at a different level in Hungary and The Ukraine, consequently the *extent to which the community law, the *acquis communautaire* has been taken over* is different. In Hungary, legal harmonisation is practically complete, deficiencies only being in the field of the institutional network responsible for the reception of the resources from the Structural Funds. On 16 April 2003, Hungary signed in Athens the contract on the accession to the European Union, as a result of which Hungary became a full-right EU member state on 1 May 2004. To the opposite, The Ukraine is still at the first steps of the Euro-Atlantic integration; we cannot actually even talk about the taking over of the *acquis communautaire*. The objective of the Ukrainian government is the accession of the country to the European Union as soon as possible, but the preparation is only in its initial phase. One of the first steps in this process is that The Ukraine wishes to become a WTO member in 2003.

There are *no special administrative territories on either side of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border*, but there are *special business zones* on both sides, established in order to develop the economy and promote investments in the border region. In Hungary, the *Záhony and Region Business Zone* was established in 1996, involving 50 settlements of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, while in The Ukraine the Act on the *Special Economic Zone of the Transcarpathia* came into force in May 2001, providing tax allowances for a duration of 30 years for the investors (its total territory covers 737.9 hectares, of which 212 hectares are in Munkács and its neighbourhood and more than 500 hectares in the Ungvár and Csap area). The businesses settling down in the zones can receive different tax allowances, state supports and preferential credits. There is a well functioning everyday connection between the two organisations.

In the 1990s, the first *Euroregions* were established in East-Central Europe, too, aiming at the cross-border relations in the formerly isolated border regions. There is one such organisation in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region, the Carpathians Euroregion, on whose establishment the contract was signed in Debrecen on *14 February 1993* by the representatives of the border regions of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and The Ukraine. Simultaneously, the ministers of foreign affairs of Hungary, Poland and The Ukraine ratified this by the signing of a Common Declaration. The characteristic feature of this Euroregion is that its creation was influenced by politics, it was practically “top-down” created. Later on, Romanian counties joined the Euroregion. This was the first solely Eastern European Euroregional initiative, as its members only involve border regions from “post-communist” countries. The viability of the Euroregion is questionable, because of the different socio-economic development level and political systems of the participating member countries, the differences among their legal regulations and public administration systems, also because of the giant size of the Euroregion (the organisation has continuously grown since its creation, presently it covers an area in excess of **161,000** km²-s, its population is over 16 million people). Consequently, smaller bi- or trilateral organisations have been established within the Euroregion, including the Inter-regio along the Hungarian–Ukrainian–Romanian triple border (*Figure 9*).

The *visa regulations* are the same in Hungary and The Ukraine. Hungarian citizens can enter The Ukraine for duration of 30 days without a visa, in possession of a letter of invitation or a tourist voucher, with a valid return ticket, enough money, or in the case of official journeys, with a so-called delegation order of the sending organisation and the letter of invitation from the receiving party. The passport must be valid for at least half a year. The same rules apply to the Ukrainian citizens travelling to Hungary. Hungary became a full-right member of the European Union on 1 May 2004 and will have to introduce the Schengen norms in the defence of the borders. Consequently the freedom of travel without visa will probably cease to exist, probably from November 2003 on the Ukrainian citizens can only enter Hungary in possession of a visa.

Figure 9

The Carpathian Euroregion with its existing euroregion-type
interregional organisations

2.3 Political dimension

At the end of the 20th century, during the *socio-economic systemic change* affecting all East-Central European countries, the single party system typical of the socialist system was replaced again by parliamentary democracy. The system of political control was reorganised both in Hungary and The Ukraine on new grounds, and the administrative system, also the role of the individual tiers within the power hierarchy are gradually transformed as a part of the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

The formerly totally centralised, “top-down” control was replaced in *Hungary* by an effort for *decentralisation*. Local self-governance, especially of the municipalities, was given a role much more significant than before. This process has started in The Ukraine, too, but the public administration is still strongly concentrated and the socio-economic transformation slowly progresses. The acts and decrees concerning the self-governments have been changed and amended many times in The Ukraine. In July 1995, the county and local administration was centralised, by which the municipal and county government rights were taken over by the state administration.

The development of the cross-border relations is an important objective in both countries, but it is made difficult by the *different hierarchy* and independence of the *administrative tiers*. While the municipal governments have broad self-governance rights in Hungary, in The Ukraine their independence is rather restricted. In The Ukraine the *district level in public administration* exists (there are 13 districts in the Transcarpathia), while in Hungary the *micro-regions*, compatible with the NUTS 4 level of the regional statistical system of the European Union, have been established. These micro-regions, however, do not have administrative functions. In addition, there are *self-organising micro-regions* in both countries (they are only now established in the Transcarpathia), whose borders do not coincide with the borders of the statistical micro-regions and the districts. In both countries there are *counties* compatible with the NUTS 3 level, but while these are the highest sub-national administrative tiers in The Ukraine, in Hungary the NUTS 2 level regions consisting of counties have already been established.

The Ukraine has been an independent state since 24 August 1991. It is a *republic*, a presidential–parliamentary republic as stated by the Constitution, but much more of a presidential republic in reality. At the top of the executive power there is the Cabinet of the Ministers, the top organ of jurisdiction is the High Court, the Constitutional Court. The president is elected for five years, the now president, Viktor Yushenko was elected in December 2004 for this position. The 21 November 2004 runoff determined whether Ukraine fulfils its quest for democracy and integration into the Euro-Atlantic community or maintains its corrupt status-quo drifting increasingly toward an authoritarian system along the Eurasian model. The result was what some have dubbed the “Chestnut Revolution” – named for the

chestnut trees that line the boulevards of Kyiv. Others called it the “Orange Revolution” – named for the opposition's campaign colour. The election results demonstrated deep regional divisions within the country. The people of 16 western regions of The Ukraine voted with one voice for Yuschenko, while 9 eastern regions give one's majority of votes to Viktor Yanukovich.

Its Parliament (the Highest Council of The Ukraine) is a single-chamber parliament, with 450 representatives in it. They are elected for four years, 225 of them from party lists and the other 225 in electoral districts. Party lists can be made up by parties registered at least one year prior to the elections, or their election alliances, but not by social organisations. In The Ukraine there are only national party lists, with not more than 250 names on it. The same representative can only run for the position either in an electoral district or from the party list. The parliamentary elections have only one round, there is no participation threshold for the validity of the elections, the representatives are elected by a simple majority. If two first representatives are given the same number of votes, the voting is held again.

At the latest *parliamentary elections* (31 March 2002), the distribution of the mandates changed significantly. The Ukrainian Communist Party received the most mandates (123), followed by the nationalist RUH (People's Movement of The Ukraine, 46 mandates), the Ukrainian Socialist Party–Ukrainian Peasants Party (34), the People's Democratic Party (28), also 114 independent representatives and 105 nominees representing other parties. The alliance called Our Ukraine (an alliance organised around the popular ex-president, Victor Yuschenko, consisting of 10 middle-right wing parties, including the nationalist RUH) and the movement For the Single Ukraine (led by the leader of the presidential administration, Volodimir Litvin) received the most mandates (110 and 101, respectively). On the other hand, the Ukrainian Communist Party lost a lot of mandates (now they have only 65). In the Highest Council, Transcarpathia county is represented by 6 MPs from party lists, including 4 independent ones and one Hungarian representative, (István Gajdos), who is member of the Ukrainian United Social Democratic Party.

In Hungary there were four parties at the elections of 2002 that reached the threshold to get into the Parliament (5%), the parties making the government coalition (Hungarian Socialist Party and the Alliance of Free Democrats) received 51.29% of the mandates, while the FIDESZ (Alliance of Young Democrats) – MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) coalition 48.71% of them.

Because the Hungarian regions are very young, on the one hand, and do not have administrative functions, on the other, they do not appear on their own in the national political life or at the supranational level. In The Ukraine the regional tier has not even been created. It is well demonstrated by the fact that the Euroregions established in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region (Carpathians Euroregion and Interregio) were organised on county and not regional grounds. It comes directly from the above facts that no regionalist parties have been founded, and although

this border region has already experienced several internal and external conflicts deriving from ethnic oppositions, separatism has not at all become a typical objective.

2.4 Economic dimension

At the analysis of the endowments of the Hungarian–Ukrainian borders, one of the biggest problems is caused by the *lack of comparable statistical data*. In addition to the different ways of data collection, another problem in connection with the time series is the fact that The Ukraine became independent only in 1991, and the former Soviet data do not always reflect the truth, or they are very hard or impossible to obtain. In The Ukraine there were no available statistical publications for a long time, because of the financial difficulties of the publication, in fact, several statistical data are still not public. The Ukraine is only planning the submission of the request for the European Union accession; consequently the national regional statistical planning system compatible with the EUROSTAT has not been created yet. Another problem in both countries is caused by the several changes in the data collection and systematisation over the recent decade and a half, so in many cases the data are not comparable with each other.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the independent Ukraine was born in 1991. Similarly to the other countries in the region, the Ukrainian economy fell into a crisis after the systemic change, from which the country is only starting to recover. The GDP per capita fell from 1991 to 1999 by more than 60% (calculated at purchasing power parity, from 5,180 USD to 2,200 USD), since then it has been rising again, the annual growth rate was 9.1% in 1991. The Hungary economy was affected by the systemic change, too, but the recession was not as serious as in The Ukraine. In 2001 the value of GDP calculated at purchasing power parity was still low compared to the European Union average, but it reached 13,400 USD (*Table 9*). GDP figures at regional level are only available in Hungary, which show that the GDP calculated at purchasing power parity is moderately increasing in the North Great Plain region, but it has the last position in the order of the Hungarian regions.

Because the Transcarpathia region situated at the western edge of the Soviet Union, it never was a target of large-scale industrial investments, the *dominant branch of the economy is agriculture*. The economy of the county – all branches of that – is of low efficiency, characterised by a low technical level and organisation. The former urban industry went bankrupt and was closed down. The volume of manufacturing in the county is less than half the national average. The decline of the production, lasting until 1999, affected 70.5% of the companies in the county,

influencing in a negative way the development of the real incomes of the population. The recovery of the economy started in Transcarpathia in 2000, the decline of agricultural production stopped, the output of industry grew by 12% in 2000 and 21% in 2001 compared to the previous year.

Table 9

GDP per capita at current prices, in US dollars, 2001

Countries	Based on current exchange rates		Based on current purchasing power parities	
	USD	EU15 = 100	USD	EU15 = 100
EU 15	20,800	100.0	25,500	100.0
Hungary	5,100	24.5	13,400	52.5
Ukraine	720	3.5	4,150	16.3

Source: www.oecd.org, Ukrainian data: www.worldbank.org.

The volume of *foreign direct investments* is ever increasing in The Ukraine too, reaching a total of 8.8 billion USD by April 1, 2005. Nevertheless the volume of foreign direct investment per capita is still the one of the lowest among the countries in the region. The USA as the largest investor has a 1,207.8 million USD share from the cumulative foreign direct investments in The Ukraine, which is 13.7% of all investments, followed by Cyprus with 1,115 million USD (12.7%). Great Britain has invested 938.6 million USD in The Ukraine (10.7%). The foreign investors usually prefer food processing and manufacturing industry, wholesale trade, financial sector and real estate. Among the regions, Kyiv has a 2 billion USD share from the foreign direct investments, followed by Kyiv region (462 million USD) and the *Dnipropetrovsk* region (484 million USD) until October 1, 2003. The number of businesses operating with the involvement of foreign capital is 9,161.

The *Hungarian–Ukrainian foreign trade relations* are characterised by a considerably negative balance on the Hungarian side, because of the large-scale import of energy and raw materials. Among the neighbouring countries, the Hungarian investors and business co-owners have the first position in the Transcarpathia and the ninth position in The Ukraine as a whole. The businesses registered in Hungary have invested some 30 million USD until now in their Ukrainian businesses. It is promising that the volume of Hungarian export to The Ukraine increased by 43% in 2003 compared to the previous year, and the balance of the foreign trade of the year exceeded one billion USD, for the first time after a long time. In The Ukraine there are approximately 260 successful Hungarian–Ukrainian joint ventures, making some 3,000 business contracts annually. The Ukrainian investors, who are usually short of capital, play a much less significant role in Hungary.

In the Transcarpathia region the data of January 2004 showed that the total amount of foreign direct investment was 244.3 million USD, which is less than 5% of the capital invested in The Ukraine. By the volume of investments drawn the region occupies 10th place among the regions of Ukraine, by the investments per capita it is at 6th position in Ukraine. Since The Ukraine became independent, Hungary has continuously been the largest foreign investor in the Transcarpathia. Hungary is the fifth in the county with a total of 25.9 million USD, i.e. 10.6% of the foreign direct investments registered in the Transcarpathia. The largest investor is the USA with 15.6% of total volume, followed by Japan with 14.1%, Germany is the third with 11.9% and Austria the fourth with 10.8%. Among the investments, 32 companies operate as joint ventures and 62 as completely foreign owned businesses. Among the neighbouring countries, the Hungarian investors and company co-owners have the first position in the Transcarpathia: there are more than 110 Ukrainian–Hungarian joint ventures here.

Unemployment is a serious problem in both border regions. In the North Great Plain the unemployment rate is constantly over the national average, and the proportion of unskilled and long-term unemployed is high (*Figure 10*). The unemployment indices of the Transcarpathia area were among the worst in The Ukraine, too till 2003. The official data reveal a very good situation as regards unemployment: according to them, in 2000 the number of registered unemployed was 11.6%, 13.1% in 2001, 11.9% in 2002 and at the end of 2003 only 7.0%. These official data do not reflect the real number of the unemployment, as only every tenth jobless person turns to the employment centres (thus the real share of the unemployed is at least ten times higher, according to the estimations). The social tensions are further exacerbated by the latent unemployment (involuntary holidays, decreased number of shifts, shorter working time).

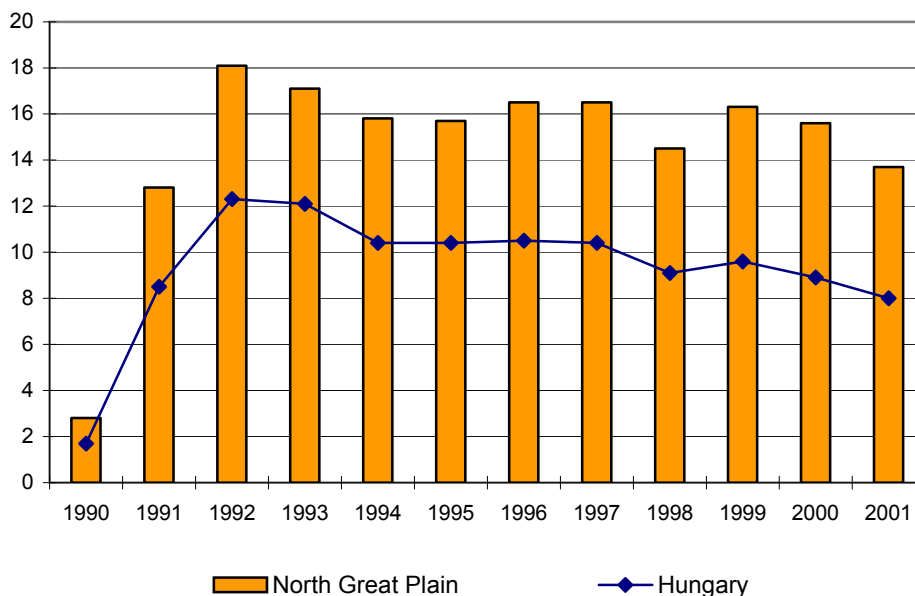
The Hungarian–Ukrainian border is characterised by a large number of people living from *cross-border subsistence trade*. The most frequent activity is the export of cheap Ukrainian fuel and products falling within the Inland Revenues Act (mainly tobacco and spirits) to Hungary. The Transcarpathia mostly import food and technical devices from Hungary. The main actors in this process are primarily the Transcarpathia population living in difficult economic circumstances, but fuel tourism is done by many on the Hungarian side of the border, too. This process can mainly be seen in the traffic figures of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, which is affected to a large extent by the subsistence trade.

The *personal and vehicle traffic* of this *border section* has changed a lot since the opening of the border in 1989. The dominant element of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border is the border crossing station at Záhony, the major part of the total traffic still occurs here. In 1988, when Záhony was the only border crossing station, 2,140,471 people crossed the border. The following political easing and the parallel opening of border crossing stations (four new stations: Lónya, Babarás,

Beregsurány, Tiszabecs) resulted in a travel fever never seen before, the Hungarian–Ukrainian border was crossed by 11,210,839 persons in 1989 (a more than fivefold increase!). We have to mention, however, that a significant part of the passengers in 1989 were transit passengers: the primary travel destination of the citizens in the Transcarpathia was Yugoslavia, very popular in the Transcarpathia, also, the transit traffic of Polish citizens “specialised” on small-scale retail trade and currency conversion was very intensive (more than 1 million people in 1989!). At that time the Soviet rouble could be officially converted. The increase of the traffic was followed by a decline until 1991: the bilateral border crossing station in Záhony ceased to exist, the number of transit journeys decreased, in 1991 the bilateral border crossing stations did not operate all year round.

Figure 10

LFS-based unemployment rate, 1992–2003



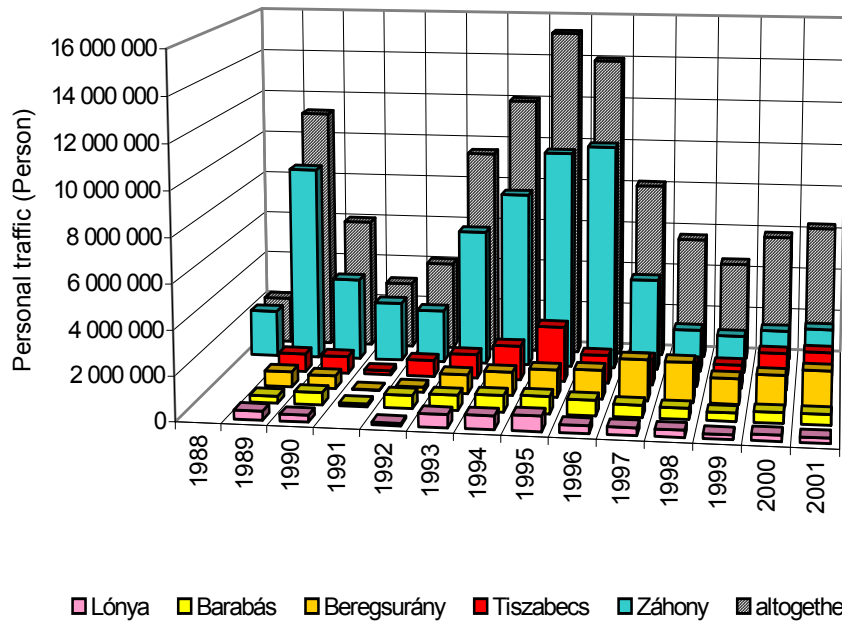
Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

Another rise could be seen again until the mid–1990s, at the peak of which, in 1995, more than 15 million border crossings were registered at this border section. In this period the main motivation of traffic was the so-called “Z-tourism”, i.e. the export of used cars to The Ukraine, because from 1993 to 1995 used cars of Soviet make could be exported to The Ukraine free of duty. These cars were given in Hungary a temporary licence plate starting with a letter “Z”. Also, it was possible to reclaim VAT on the cars exported from Hungary.

Since the introduction of the Ukrainian duty acts that came into force in 1996–1998 (restriction of the import of food and technical devices, introduction of high duties), the traffic decreased until 1999, since then it has been rising again. The major part of the goods of those involved in *subsistence trade* is less and less marketable because of the new strict laws and customs regulations; the most important, practically only viable way of subsistence trade remained fuel tourism (*Figure 11*).

Figure 11

Personal traffic across the checkpoints of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border between 1988 and 2001



Source: Hungarian National Headquarters of the Hungarian Border Guard, 2001. Edited by the authors.

2.5 Social dimension

The *population trends* were similar in the two neighbouring border regions. The number of population has been decreasing in both regions; since 1996 in the Transcarpathia and 1992 in the North Great Plain (in the case of the Hungarian region, the 2001 data are taken from the last census, while the previous ones are the calculated figures on the ground of the census before 1990, this is why we can see such a big difference between the data of 2000 and 2001). The indices of natural increase are far above the national average in both border regions (*Table 10*), which is especially true for the Transcarpathia, where natural decrease only occurred in 1999, and after 2001 in the surveyed period (while natural decrease has been a tendency in The Ukraine as a whole since 1991).

Since the late 1980s, *outmigration* has characterised both border regions. In the North Great Plain, the main destinations of the migrations are the western regions of Hungary and Budapest, only a few moves abroad. The biggest number of outmigrants has been from Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County for a long while. In the Transcarpathia, the direction of the migrations is to the east, but the number of those moving abroad is more significant, too. In 2000, the migration loss was 2,498 people in the Transcarpathia, and those moving abroad accounted for more than half of that (1,259 people). The main destinations of the emigrants were Germany (33.9%), Hungary (32.4%), also the USA (11.1%), the Czech Republic (9.9%) and Israel (8.9%).

The North Great Plain is not a densely populated region of Hungary, the *density of population* was 87.3 persons per km² according to the 2003 data; with this figure the region lags far behind the national average (108.7 people/km²). To the opposite, the Transcarpathia region is a densely populated one by Ukrainian standards, despite the decrease of the population in the recent years: the population density in the Transcarpathia is 97.7 persons/km², as opposed to the national average The Ukraine that only reaches 78.9 persons/km² (*Table 10*). *Both border regions are less urbanised* than the average of their respective country. In the North Great Plain, the proportion of urban population has been increasing, like in Hungary on the whole, whereas the proportion of the urban population is lowest in Transcarpathia among all Ukrainian counties, in fact, this figure has been continuously decreasing since 1988 (*Table 11*). The main reason of the decrease is the worsening urban living conditions as a consequence of the economic crisis since the 1990s.

All the autochthonous *ethnic minorities* in the territory of the Republic of Hungary are characterised by a sporadic location, double identity, progressed assimilation and strong emotional and cultural affection to Hungary. The North Great Plain, similarly to the whole of Hungary, can be regarded as a homogeneous region from the ethnic point of view. If we do not consider the Gypsies as an ethnic minority (the Gypsies are not a single ethnic group, there are only estimated data of

Table 10

Inhabitants number, population density and natural increase,
1998–2003

Table 11

Urban population as percentage of total, 1988–2003

Year	Hungary	North Great Plain	Ukraine	Transcarpathia
1988	59.4	49.4	n.d.a.	40.9
1989	61.9	54.8	n.d.a.	41.1
1990	62.0	55.1	67.5	41.5
1991	62.3	55.9	67.8	41.8
1992	62.7	58.3	67.9	42.1
1993	63.2	60.0	67.9	41.4
1994	62.8	60.0	67.9	41.1
1995	62.6	60.0	67.9	39.8
1996	63.6	60.0	67.8	39.1
1997	62.9	60.2	67.9	39.1
1998	63.5	61.0	67.9	39.0
1999	63.3	60.9	68.0	39.0
2000	63.6	61.0	68.0	39.0
2001	64.1	61.9	67.2	37.0
2002	65.0	62.9	67.2	37.0
2003	64.8	62.7	67.5	37.0

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office; The State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine.

their number and most of them declare themselves Hungarian), the combined proportion of all the minorities living here does not reach 1%. In the North Great Plain the Romanian ethnic minority is the most significant, although there are only three settlements in Hajdú-Bihar County where their proportion exceeds 1% from the total population. Besides them, a very small number of Slovaks, Germans and Ukrainians live here. At the same time, the proportion of those belonging to the Roma (Gypsy) ethnic group is significant, but there are no reliable data about their number. In Hungary the ethnic minorities have broad cultural autonomy, they have several local and national interest representation and cultural groups, in fact, they even have minority self-governments in several settlements of the North Great Plain. The ethnic minorities have a representation in the media, as well, they have newspapers published in their mother tongue and the National Television of Hungary regularly broadcasts their ethnic programmes.

The ethnic composition of the Transcarpathia region has always been mixed. According to the data of the census, its population was 600,000 people in 1910, when 59% of the population was Ruthene (Transcarpathian Ukrainian), 25% Hungarian, 11% Jewish, 3% German and 1.2% Romanian. A smaller number of Czechs, Slovaks and Gypsies lived here, too, but their combined share did not

exceed 1%. In 1910, the share of Ukrainians was negligible. Following World War II, Transcarpathia became part of the Soviet Union, and the new political situation had an effect on the ethnic composition of the population. The most striking change was that the proportion of the Ukrainian population suddenly grew to 82.3%, which of the Hungarians decreased to 8.7% and of the Jews to 3.1%. The high proportion of the Ukrainians is explained, besides immigration, by the fact that the data of 1944 considered the Ruthene population with a 61.2% share as Ukrainians. The population censuses have not published data about the Ruthenes since 1946, so it is almost impossible to estimate their present number. According to the census of 2001, besides the Ukrainians the most significant ethnic minority in the Transcarpathia is the Hungarian group forming a block along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, their proportion is 12.1% (*Table 12, Figure 12*). The ethnic composition of The Ukraine as a whole is quite different: besides the Ukrainians (77.8%), the most important minority are the Russians (17.3%), and there is no other ethnic group in the data of the census of 2001 whose share reaches 1% from the total of the population (*Table 13*).

Since the birth of the independent Ukrainian state, the situation of the ethnic minorities in the Transcarpathia has improved. The *act on the national minorities*, approved of in 1992, secures the right of the use of the mother tongue and the right to the education in the mother tongue, to own cultural institutional system and ethnic-cultural autonomy. The act allows the operation of organisations protecting the interests of the minorities, the use of national symbols, the use of names according to the rules of the mother tongue, and the free cross-border relations with the mother nation, but does not allow the minorities to establish territorial autonomy.

Table 12

Ethnic composition of Transcarpathia, 2001

Ethnic group	Inhabitants number (thousand)	% of total		2001 as % of the 1989
		2001	1989	
Ukrainian	1,010.1	80.5	78.4	103.4
Hungarian	151.5	12.1	12.5	97.3
Romanian	32.1	2.6	2.4	109.0
Russian	31.0	2.5	4.0	62.7
Gipsy	14.0	1.1	1.0	115.4
Slovak	5.6	0.5	0.6	77.7
German	3.5	0.3	0.3	103.0
Total	1,254.6	100.0	100.0	100.7

Source: National census of Ukraine, 2001.

FIGURE 12
HUNGARIANS IN TRANSCARPATHIA, 2001

Table 13

Ethnic composition of Ukraine, 2001

Ethnic group	Inhabitants number (thousand)	% of total		2001 as % of the 1989
		2001	1989	
Ukrainian	37,541.7	77.8	72.7	100.3
Russian	8,334.1	17.3	22.1	73.4
Belorussian	275.8	0.6	0.9	62.7
Moldavian	258.6	0.5	0.6	79.7
Crimean tatar	248.2	0.5	0.0	–
Bulgarian	204.6	0.4	0.5	87.5
Hungarian	156.6	0.3	0.4	96.0
Romanian	151.0	0.3	0.3	112.0
Polish	144.1	0.3	0.4	65.8
Jewish	103.6	0.2	0.9	21.3
Armenian	99.9	0.2	0.1	–
Greek	91.5	0.2	0.2	92.9
Tatar	73.3	0.2	0.2	84.4
Gipsy	47.6	0.1	0.1	99.3
Azerian	45.2	0.1	0.0	122.2
Georgian	34.2	0.1	0.0	145.3
German	33.3	0.1	0.1	88.0
Gagauzi	31.9	0.1	0.1	99.9
Other	177.1	0.4	0.4	83.9

Source: National census of Ukraine, 2001.

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s it was possible to found open minority interest representation organisations. The first and still the biggest interest representation organisation of the Hungarians living in the Transcarpathia is the *Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia*, founded in 1989. In addition, several other minority and professional bodies represent the Hungarians in The Ukraine (e.g. the *Democratic Alliance Hungarians in The Ukraine*, *Cultural Association of Hungarians in the Bereg region*, *Transcarpathia Community of Hungarian Intellectuals*, *Association of Hungarian Teachers in Transcarpathia* etc.). In several settlements of the Transcarpathia, where one of the national minorities make the majority of the population, the education takes place in their mother tongue (*Table 14*), in fact, there is an independent higher education institution working with the support of the Hungarian state (Teacher Training College for the Hungarians in Transcarpathia).

Table 14

The distribution of schools in Transcarpathia according to the language of instruction, 1989–2001

School year	Ukrainian	Russian	Hungarian	Romanian	Slovak
1989/1990	594	40	86	13	–
1990/1991	597	39	88	13	–
1991/1992	602	38	88	13	–
1992/1993	618	34	89	13	1
1993/1994	621	32	90	13	1
1994/1995	629	32	94	13	1
1995/1996	631	30	97	13	1
1996/1997	630	28	98	13	1
1997/1998	631	18	98	13	2
1998/1999	634	8	98	13	2
1999/2000	634	8	99	13	2
2000/2001	635	8	100	13	2

Source: www.htmh.hu.

In the North Great Plain region adjacent to The Ukraine, the *languages of the ethnic minorities* only play a role in the everyday connections with each other, in the field of culture and in keeping in touch with the mother nation. In Transcarpathia, according to the ethnic composition, Ukrainian (the state language) is the most frequently spoken language, but the number of those speaking Hungarian, Romanian and Russian language is also significant. Gypsy, Slovakian and German are also used.

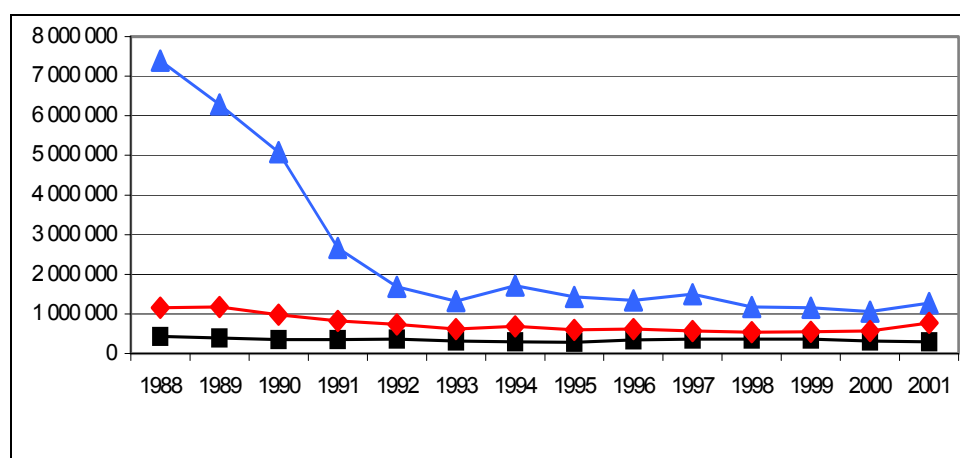
There are no comparable statistical data about *crime*, but in general it can be said that the number of known crimes has increased in both border regions since 1988, and the number of crimes connected to the border has also grown. In addition to the smuggling of goods and the violation of the Inland Revenue Act, the organised smuggling of persons is more and more important. The direction of the illegal migration across the Hungarian–Ukrainian border is from the east to the west, from The Ukraine usually Chinese, Afghan and Vietnamese citizens try to get to Western Europe through Hungary.

In both border regions, the *conditions of socio-cultural recreation* are given, but as an affect of the negative economic processes of the 1990s, the population had to spend a bigger and bigger share of their income on their living, consequently their expenditure on culture decreased. The number of visits to theatres, cinemas and museums significantly dropped in the North Great Plain (*Figure 13*). It is true for

both border regions, especially for the Transcarpathia, that because of maintenance and capacity utilisation problems, the physical state of the establishments – especially in the rural settlements – has deteriorated a lot, in fact, several institutions have been closed down.

Figure 13

The number of museum visitors and the audience of theatres and cinemas in the North Great Plain Region, 1988–2003



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Edited by the authors.

Table 15

Number of hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, 1995–2003

Year	Ukraine	Transcarpathia	Hungary	North Great Plain
1995	125.1	114.9	90.7	74.8
1998	97.0	108.3	83.0	73.3
1999	96.5	83.4	83.6	74.6
2000	95.0	83.8	83.2	74.4
2001	96.6	84.4	79.0	74.3
2002	97.3	86.4	79.2	71.8
2003	96.6	84.8	78.9	72.3

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office; The State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine.

As regards *health care*, both border regions are in a worse situation than the average of their respective countries, but the differences between the North Great Plain and Transcarpathia are considerable. Because of the differences of the statistical data collection, comparable data are only available about the number of operating hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, by which index the Transcarpathia area is in a better situation (*Table 15*). However, this is only a quantitative index, and the equipment, technical level and instruments used in the Transcarpathia are very poor. In addition, the number of medicines and therapeutic equipment supported by the social insurance is very low, which often occurs that the in-patients of the hospitals have to bring the medicines necessary for their treatment.