

## ABSTRACT

### **The 30th Anniversary of the Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities**

#### **DOBOS, Balázs: Preparations for the 1993 Minorities Act**

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30 years have passed since the adoption of Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary, the preparation of which began in 1988. The growing scholarly interest in the Act and the system of minority self-government it established, the Hungarian institution of non-territorial minority autonomy, is linked to the broader discourse and findings on the general nature, goals, motivations, and instruments of the country's minority policy. In this respect, the argument seems to be widely accepted that domestic minority policy has always been more subordinated to cross-border considerations, and that the adoption of the Minorities Act itself was driven by political considerations related to the situation of the Hungarian minority communities and the country's intention to set an example and exert pressure. In the light of these considerations, the present study aims to highlight some other important aspects that have received disproportionately less attention in the scholarly discourse, but which had a major impact on the preparation of the Act. Specifically, the paper examines how the issue of the Act was able to enter the political agenda shortly before the regime change, and how the concepts referred to often as 'national liberal' and 'autonomist' clashed during the drafting of the act.

The analysis then goes on to consider the views of administrative and territorial actors and the financial and funding aspects of the Act in the context of economic transition. The focus is thus more on the question of how the mother country's policies have affected the ability of national minorities in Hungary to participate effectively in the drafting of provisions of law fundamentally affecting them.

The study also discusses the extent to which minority policy in Hungary has been integrated into the broader post-communist regional context and the extent to which it is consistent with recent literature on the legacy of communism, nation and state building, the nature of minority policy and the rise of non-territorial minority autonomy in Central and Eastern Europe.

#### **Kiss, Balázs: Contribution to the Parliamentary Debate on the Bill on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, with Special Regard to the Definition and Scope of National and Ethnic Minorities and the Legal Framework for Declaring them a Native Ethnic Groups**

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This study examines the relevant sections of the Bill on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, the minutes of the Parliament, the Committee on Human Rights, Minorities and Religious Affairs, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, the Drafting and Justice Committee, and the amendments to the Bill in order to highlight the main points of the debates on the normative definition of national and ethnic minorities, the enumeration of national

and ethnic minorities and the procedure for declaring them a native ethnic group. It can be concluded that the parliamentary and committee debates between the summer of 1992 and the summer of 1993, which were full of disagreements, did not result in any modifications to the merits of the bill, and that in 1993, by establishing the normative definition of national and ethnic minorities, listing the ethnic groups recognised as native and establishing the possibility of recognition as a native ethnic group, the Parliament passed a piece of legislation that fundamentally defines the field of nationality law in Hungary to this day.

**KÁLLAI, Ernő: Operation of the Minority Round Table II between 2007 and 2011** 41

In 2007, the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minorities (Minority Ombudsman) established the Second Minority Roundtable with the participation of the leaders of 13 national minority communities in order to coordinate and improve the efficiency of the representation of minority communities. The Consultative Forum was modelled on the First Round Table, which was set up in 1991 after the regime change. The agenda of the Second Round Table included the representatives of the minorities in Parliament, amendments to the Minorities Act, and in this context the issues of legal personality, personal scope, the minority electoral register, minority self-government elections, the nomination of candidates, and the preferential mandate. In addition, there were joint discussions and consultations with the leaders and experts of minority self-governments on current issues of the management and financing of minority self-governments, and on minority media, especially mother-tongue radio and television programmes. The constitutional reform after the change of government in 2010 abolished the institution of the Ombudsman for Minorities, and Round Table II has now completed its work.

**M. BALÁZS, Ágnes: Who Represent National Minorities in Parliament? National-minority Issues and Representation in the National Assembly—beyond Spokespersons** 63

Formal representation of national minorities has been ensured since 2014 in the Hungarian National Assembly. Since then, a nationality MP may represent the 13 acknowledged national minorities, provided that the list established by the national nationality self-government concerned passes a preferential threshold. The presence of nationalities not fulfilling this criterion is ensured by nationality spokespersons having fewer competencies than MPs. Between 2014 and 2018, only nationality spokespersons took part in the Parliament's work, while, since 2018, one nationality MP, Imre Ritter, has been present in the legislature as well. Their activity and impact on the parliamentary agenda have been subject to several studies. In this paper, we argue that if we want to get a broader picture of the substantive representation of minorities in Hungarian legislation, it is not enough to examine the activity of the MP and spokespersons who won a seat in the Parliament from the lists of national

nationality self-governments. The examination of minority-related issues on the legislative agenda is not satisfactory either. It is also to be examined, whether MPs who gained seats not as candidates on the national nationality self-governments' lists have backgrounds that connect them to a certain minorities, and whether they represented minority interests in Parliament more or less than the minority MPs and spokespersons between 2014 and 2022. This is the main aim of this paper.

## Interview

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## Dissidence in Romania

**JÁNOSI, Csongor - PINTILESCU, Corneliu: The Permeability of the Iron Curtain, the Helsinki Platform and Dissidence in Romania. Doina Cornea and Éva Cs. Gyimesi between Lone Protest and Solidarity Networks** 103  
Drawing on multiple types of diverse sources, the authors attempt to present the emergence and structuring of dissent in late socialist Romania as a phenomenon in which global flows are intertwined with transformations in the Eastern bloc and with specific national or local processes. Through the cases of dissidents among the most influential and visible members of opposition circles, they describe the diffusion of Western human rights discourse in Eastern Europe, the local impact of mass media outlets outside Romania, the local and transnational networks supporting their activities, the limits of the rapprochement between Romanian and Hungarian opposition circles, alongside the strategies and outcomes adopted by the authorities.

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