

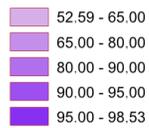


# Transylvania Today: June – August 2017

“Transylvania Today,” published by the American Hungarian Federation’s International Affairs Committee, focuses on recent political and social events in Romania and Transylvania and how they relate to the ethnic Hungarian minority that resides there.

## Ethnic map of Romania based on 2011 census data

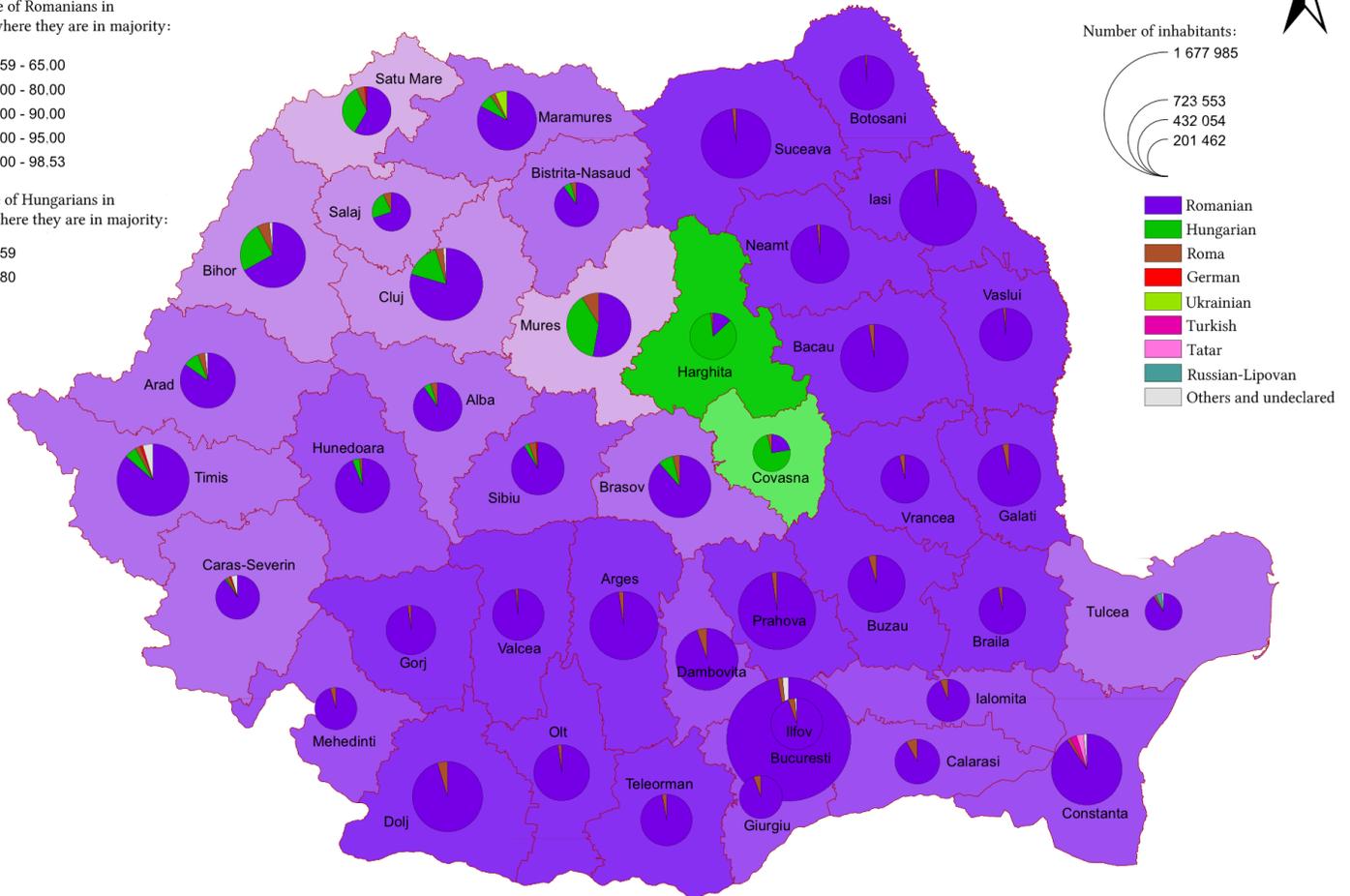
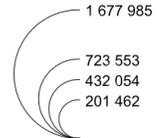
Percentage of Romanians in counties where they are in majority:



Percentage of Hungarians in counties where they are in majority:



Number of inhabitants:



### Distribution of the Population According to the 2011 Census

<b>Romanians</b>	16,792,868	German	36,042
<b>Hungarians</b>	1,227,623	Russian-Lipovan	23,487
<b>Roma</b>	621,573	Turks	27,698
<b>Ukrainians</b>	50,920	Tatars	13,654

## Backdrop

According to the 2011 census, the population of Romania was 20,121,641, of which 6.1% were ethnic Hungarians. The majority of the Hungarians in Romania live in areas that were part of Hungary prior to the 1920 Treaty of Trianon. The most prominent of these areas is *Székely Land (Szeklerland, Tinutul Secuicesc or Székelyföld)*, which is in a region known as Transylvania. Of the forty-one counties of Romania, Hungarians form a significant population in the counties of Harghita (85.21%), Covasna (73.74%), and Mures (38.09%). Other counties with a notable Hungarian population include Satu Mare (34.65%), Bihor (25.27%), Sălaj (23.35%), and Cluj (15.93%).

## Hungarian goals and rights

The major representative of Hungarians in Romania, an organization known as the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR), seeks to achieve self-government as well as cultural and territorial autonomy for the Hungarian minority. These goals mean guaranteeing the right of democratically elected officials in Hungarian communities to decide local affairs, preserve the use of the Hungarian language, maintain educational institutions, and promote Hungarian cultural activities. Although Romania co-signed the European laws protecting such minority rights, their implementation has been lacking and of little proven benefit to the broader Hungarian community.

## Continued discrimination

In fact, the Hungarian community in Transylvania continues to experience systematic discrimination by Romanian authorities, including illegal arrests, closure of Hungarian institutions that include schools, and prevention of Hungarian cultural activities. This deliberate discrimination also involves illegal actions carried out by Romanian citizens, such as vandalism of assorted Hungarian properties including buildings, homes, and cemeteries.

## Closing a Hungarian Roman Catholic high school

The latest example of Romanian discrimination against the Hungarian population of Transylvania involves a Romanian plan to close a Hungarian Roman Catholic high school. To express their opposition to this plan, on September 5, 2017, thousands gathered in the Transylvanian city of Targu Mures, formerly known as Marosvásárhely, to peacefully register their protest. Due to Romania's Roman Catholics being predominately ethnic Hungarians, the planned closure of the school was viewed by the protesters as both an ethnic and religious-based assault on their legitimate minority rights.

The Romanian government attempted to rationalize the projected closure by alleging that the school lacked proper documentation and claimed this was the reason for launching an administrative proceeding last year against the school's principal and the school itself.

The protest in Targu Mures was organized by the Roman Catholic Status Foundation and included prominent religious leaders. Participants included György Jakubinyi, Archbishop of Alba Iulia; Béla Kató, Reformed Bishop of Transylvania; and Barna Kapás, head of the Status Foundation.

In the Hungarian government's response to the Romanian plan to close the school, Hungarian State Secretary Levente Magyar expressed shock and informed a press conference that this move was tantamount to "an attack against the Catholic Church, the Hungarian minority, children, families, and the restitution process in Romania."

## **Curtailling self-administration**

Earlier, on June 26, 2017, Balázs Izsák, President of the Székely National Council, filed an appeal in a case against the Anti-Discrimination Council whose members include former President Traian Băsescu, former Prime Minister Victor-Viorel Ponta, Romanian politician George Crin Laurențiu Antonescu, and engineer Liviu Nicolae Dragnea. The Anti-Discrimination Council, otherwise known as the National Council for Combating Discrimination, was established in 2001, and is responsible for upholding Romanian and European Union anti-discrimination laws. The lawsuit, filed on May 2017, in the Bucharest Court of Appeals (Curtea de Apel), maintained that so-called reforms advanced by Romanian authorities discriminate against the Hungarian minority by eliminating every administrative unit that currently has a Hungarian majority in violation of EU Directive 2000/43, which calls for the equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

The lower court promptly rejected the President of the Székely National Council's claim, resulting in the pending appeal.