

THE SPATIALITY OF SOCIAL-POLITICAL ACTIVITY

CIVIL SOCIETY

Viktor Pál, Lajos Boros, Olivér Kriska, Károly Kocsis

Society consists not only of individuals but also of communities serving a variety of purposes – and these communities make up civil society. In the course of everyday life, people address challenges and issues that by their very nature lie outside the purview of the state and other institutions. In doing so, they create cultural values and enhance social cohesion. In a democracy, civil society plays a vital role in strengthening individual responsibility. People acknowledge that there are many fields in life where legislation is unnecessary and where the required action is not the responsibility of the state. Engagement in civil society creates opportunities for individual fulfilment, thereby reinforcing social and community cohesion and identity. It serves, furthermore, to limit the power of political and market actors, while facilitating interaction between the state, private enterprise and the general public.

Action can be taken by individuals themselves or through the work of civil society organizations with specific goals. The range of possibilities is broad, covering almost all areas of life. Aside from charitable activities, the objective may be to preserve traditions and culture, to express and enhance identity, to disseminate knowledge or to protect interests. The actions of civil society in national life seek not only to solve problems but also to create values and enhance social cohesion and solidarity. Individuals and organizations undertake their voluntary activities on a non-profit basis without seeking financial compensation.

The meaning and significance of civil society

There are multiple definitions of the concept of civil society, but the starting point is always the ‘civic ethos’, with individual citizens taking action in society while living in line with the laws and institutions of the democratic state. The resultant civil society is a complex and multilayered structure comprising social groups and communities. These communities constitute – alongside private individuals – the main pillars of civil society. In civil society, the individual as a citizen undertakes community and social activities, doing so either

alone or by joining various organizations and thus assuming social and political responsibility. Civil society constitutes, therefore, a set of free-thinking individuals and communities acting independently from the state. In democratic societies, operating in tandem with market (private) and state (public) actors, civil society organizations comprise a third group of actors that belong to the private sector in a legal sense, but which serve public purposes.

Civil society is strongly linked to the democratic system of government. As such, it is a basic feature of modern Western societies. Yet, similar aspirations can also be observed in many other cultures. Although the notion of civil society arose at the time of the Enlightenment and the emergence of modern society in the 17th and 18th centuries, its ‘prototypes’ were the various charitable institutions and foundations that were originally connected with the Church and were established by way of donations from rulers and lords.

Civil society consists in part of voluntary organizations (e.g. associations, foundations) that constitute organized forms of public action. Laws govern their operation, management and supervision. Political parties and trade unions are not usually classified as such organizations. Yet, a sizeable number of civil society organizations do address public and political issues.

Civil society organizations are often referred to as ‘non-governmental organizations’ (NGOs). This underlines their separation from the state. Nevertheless, the relationship between civil society and the state is often viewed as symbiotic, with NGOs forming the foundation of civil society. They operate alongside the state rather than in opposition to it. Where appropriate, co-operation between the two sectors can arise.

Civil society operates not only through the work of formal organizations; individual citizens can also take action (e.g. by donating or volunteering). Further, self-organizing groups belonging to the non-institutional model may also come into being (e.g. reading circles and hiking clubs).

Since civilians take action – either individually or within organizations – without seeking financial gain, civil society is often called the non-profit sector. Indeed, its entities are frequently referred to as non-profit or-

ganizations. Yet, although some non-profit organizations are created by individuals as civil society organizations, others are established by the state (e.g. public foundations and public bodies). For this reason, the two concepts are not always synonymous. In addition to helping others, the most common motivations for civil society engagement are membership of a community or a religious/moral commitment. An additional factor is a desire to gain experience, seek self-improvement, and expand one’s network of relationships.

Civil society around the world

The concept of a separation between civil society and the state arose in Western Europe during the Enlightenment and the advent of capitalism and urbanization. The ending of the Cold War and the rise of globalization resulted in an increase in the number of civil society organizations in the eastern half of Europe. The involvement of NGOs in social dialogue and decision-making has often been viewed as vital to the functioning of democracy. At the same time, civil society can stand for different things in various parts of the world. Indeed, in each country it is influenced by the specific path of historical development and by existing traditions and power structures. Where the state is excessively powerful, grassroots communities will be few in number and limited in their public role. In contrast, in less centralized states, there may well be a multitude of organizations striving to influence socio-economic and political processes, even on occasion assuming certain functions of the state.

According to each of the various definitions, civil society should be independent of the state. Nevertheless, in some places, civil society is subject to the influence of government and the political parties, which seek to determine the methods and goals. This is unfortunate because such ‘state intervention’ inevitably undermines civil society’s capacity to serve as a guarantor of democracy.

Reflecting the divergent history, the evolution of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe differs from the Western European model. In the eastern half

Hungarian Geographical Society

There are many examples of national organizations in Hungary, but this society (founded in 1872) is one of the oldest of its kind. ¹ The Society aimed ‘to promote interest in the science of geography by spreading geographical knowledge and to encourage research on the geography of Hungary and its dissemination.’ Reflecting its popularity, it attracted 300 members in the year of its foundation, with its membership increasing to 600 by the turn of the century. The Society, which is still active today, has always pursued a broad range of activities: it publishes one of the country’s oldest scientific journals, the *Geographical Review*, while also organizing domestic and international study tours, conferences, and lectures.



¹ Pál Teleki, Archduke József and Jenő Cholnoky on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Hungarian Geographical Society (1922)

of Europe, WWII was followed by a communist takeover, decimating civil society and imposing limits on the range of civil society organizations (angling and sports clubs were permitted). The free expression of political opinions was prevented wherever there was a precedent for it (e.g. Central Europe). Elsewhere (e.g. in some of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union), civil society was smothered by the hierarchical social structure. After the change of system (1989–90), in contrast to the Western European model, a top-down development model took hold in the region. That is to say, the democratization of the state was followed by the formation of civil society. Although civil society in the eastern part of Central Europe is still underdeveloped, there do exist movements that are strongly committed to democracy and favour Western values. In Western Europe, civil society has traditions stretching back hundreds of years; in the United Kingdom, for instance, social welfare associations appeared in the 18th and 19th centuries. In German corporate culture, a functional and effective division of labour has evolved between civil society organizations and the state. Today, among the various EU countries, Sweden has the highest proportion of citizens involved in a NGO, but civic engagement is also high in Czechia, Portugal, Ireland and Luxembourg. In contrast with Czechia, post-communist Bulgaria and Romania are

Transylvanian Museum Society

Among the various regional Hungarian civil society organizations, the Transylvanian Museum Society (EME) is a particularly important one. It was founded by Imre Mikó in 1859. It was looted in 1919 and liquidated in 1949 by the Romanian state. Since its re-establishment in 1990, the Association has remained a professional organization promoting scientific and cultural life in the Transylvanian Hungarian community. Comprising several departments, it maintains a research institute, organizes conferences and exhibitions, and publishes numerous journals and other publications.

characterized by a low level of engagement, as is Hungary ^{X.2.1.} ^{X.2.2.} ^{X.2.3.}

Looking beyond Europe, mention should clearly be made of the USA, where civil society is founded on individualism and a traditional mistrust of the state. Around the world, the decisive factor is often the role played by the state: in Japan, for instance, strict regulations preserved the leading role of the state in many fields of public action, leaving few opportunities for the organized development of civil society. At the same time, however, community cohesion is strong, as individuals often help each other in everyday life. In the developing countries (e.g. in sub-Saharan Africa), the number of civil society organizations increased rapidly during the post-independence era. Today, such organizations provide a variety of services and supplement (or even replace) action by the state. Throughout the developing world, civil society has been instrumental to democratization, the protection of human rights, and the resolution of economic and social problems. This is especially true in countries struggling with domestic strife and civil wars, where civil society is often organized according to kinship, tribal or religious ties. A key role is also played by organizations financed from abroad, which can become a target for government repression or attacks by armed groups in a civil war.

Civil society and civil society organizations in Hungary

The roots of self-organization in Hungarian society go back to the Middle Ages, at which time there already existed both charitable institutions and voluntary organizations (e.g. patient care, ‘patronage’, guilds, and self-help associations). After the expulsion of the Turks, the Habsburgs sought to exercise control over the private foundations and self-help initiatives. In the first half of the 19th century, the ideas of the reform era strongly encouraged civic engagement. The political aspects of civil society were particularly important in reading circles and student associations, which, in turn, represented the starting point for organizations seeking national self-determination. The process was interrupted by Hungary’s defeat in the War of Independence of 1848–49. Although the associations were not banned, many of them were closed down or intimidated (even the politically neutral ones, such as the Royal Hungarian Society of Natural Sciences). Although modern civil society began to develop in Hungary in the early part of the 19th century, its flourishing occurred under the Dual Monarchy after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. At that time, much of the activity was conducted by civil society organizations rather than by individuals. All fields of life were affected, resulting in a blossoming of art and science as well as charitable activities. Alongside a considerable number of national organizations based in Budapest, many organizations addressed local issues and community building in other major cities throughout the country.

Scientific organizations increased in number and scope in Hungary in the late 19th century, reflecting developments in science and a growing demand for civil society organizations. The latter could facilitate the exchange of scientific ideas outside the academic framework.

The period was characterized by a kind of exclusivity: it was deemed an honour to be a member of an academic or scientific society, and members were usually recruited through recommendations. Philanthropy was expected from the elite in society, who acquired prestige in return. Consequently, in the initial period,

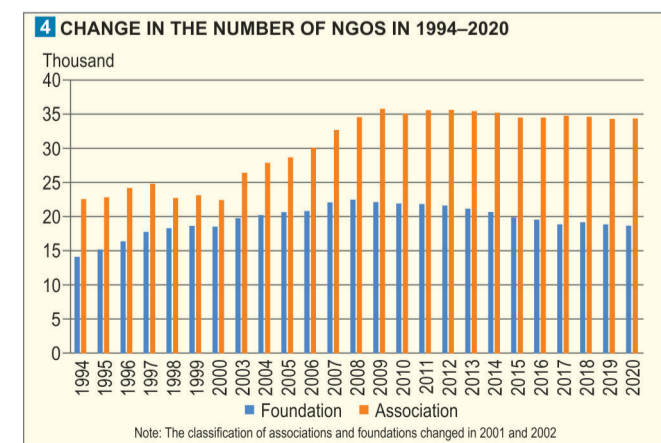
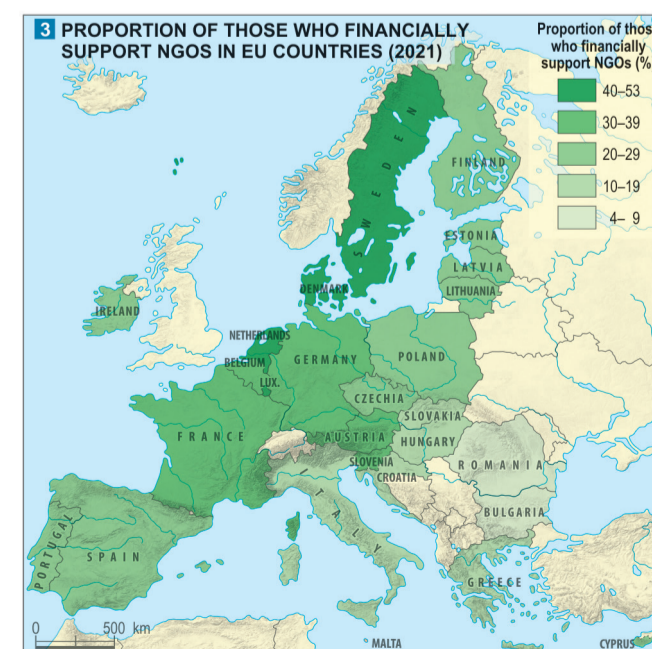
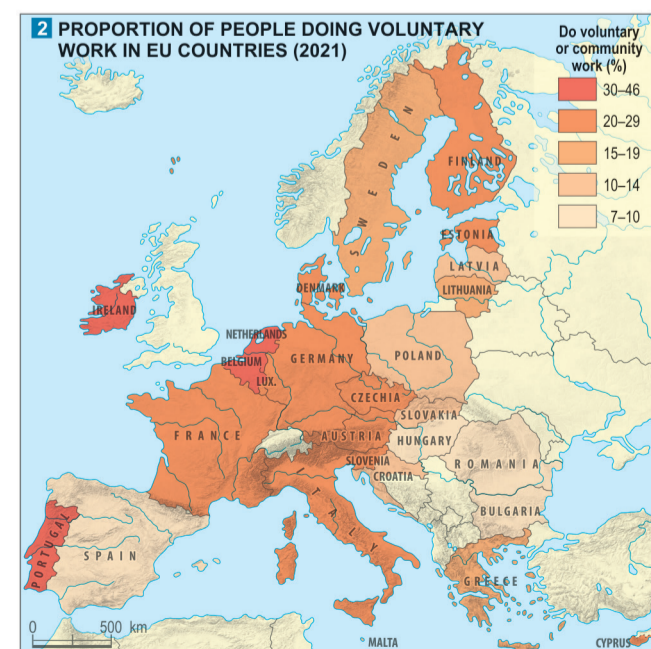
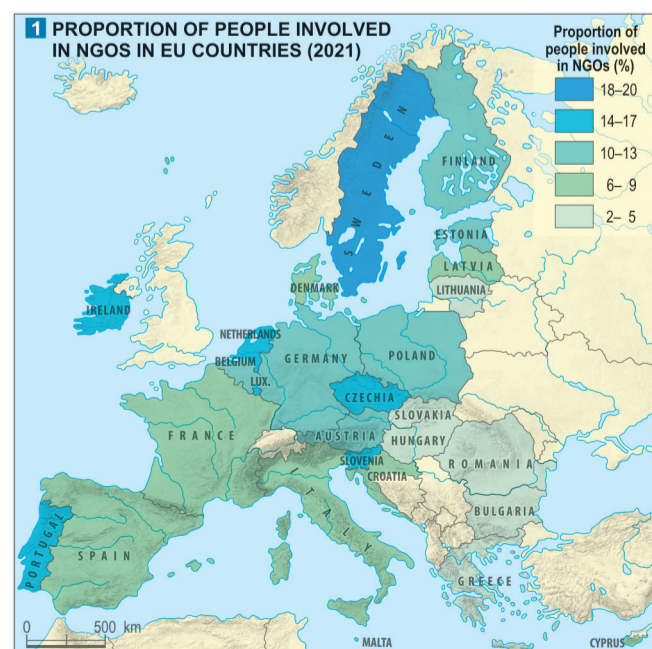
The Dugonics Society

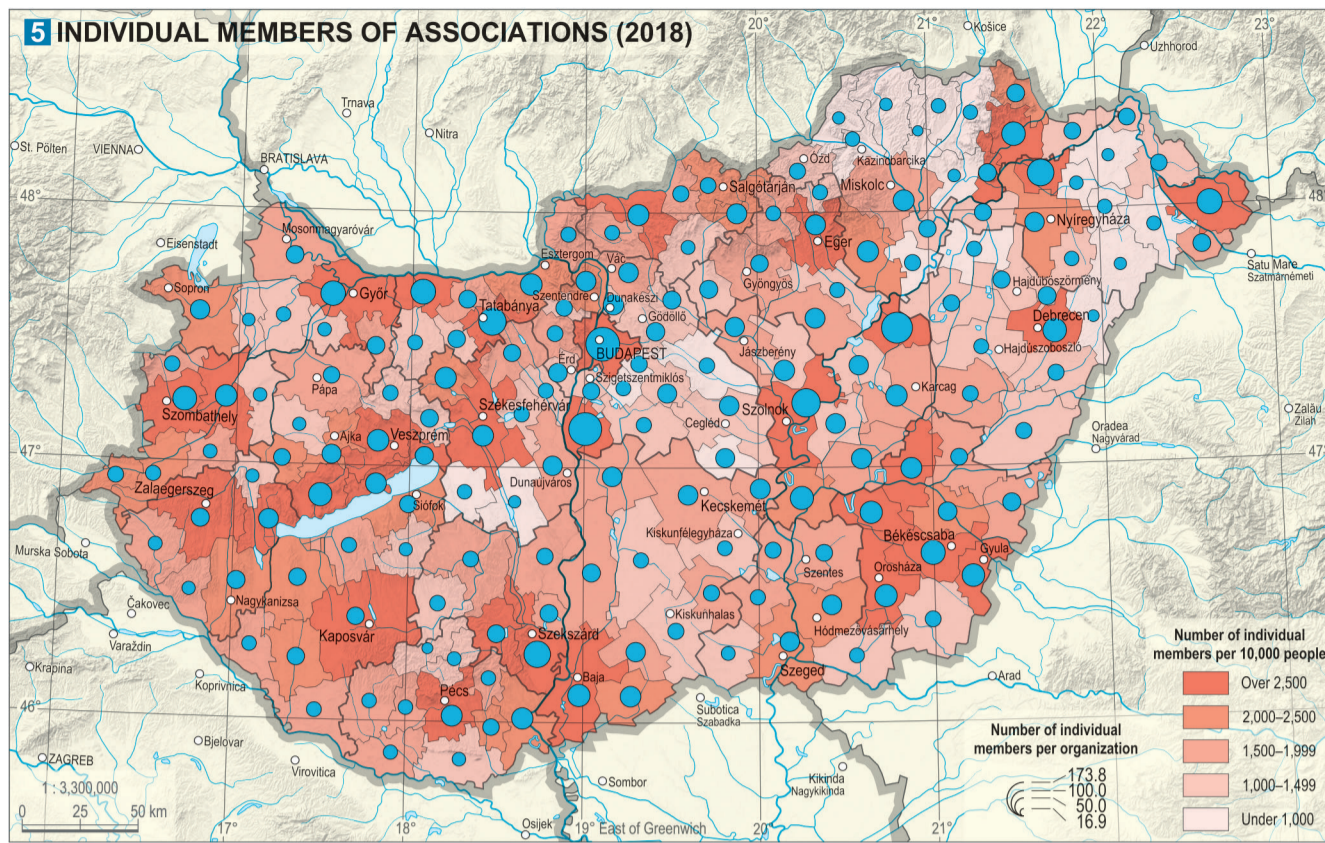
Szeged’s first civil society organization was founded in 1892 by artists, writers, and city leaders with the aim of fostering the intellectual heritage of András Dugonics, a Piarist monk, writer, mathematician from Szeged. The Dugonics Society also provided a framework for intellectual life in the city: ‘The Society’s aim is to support the cultivation of Hungarian science and the arts in the Alföld and especially in Szeged and the surrounding area and to disseminate and popularize its results.’ The Society held reading sessions at the city hall where renowned writers, poets, academics, teachers, physicians, and city officials shared their ideas with the public. The Society was dissolved in 1948. After a long wait, it was re-established in 1991.

foundations were usually created by nobles or other wealthy citizens. The need to obtain a licence from a national administrative body is indicative of the emergence of a consistent legal framework for associations in the late 19th century.

Despite changes in the regulations (resulting in periodic restrictions), the range of foundations and associations continued to expand in Hungary in the first half of the 20th century, up until the end of WW II. Beginning in 1948, however, the communist regime imposed tougher restrictions on civil society organizations, ultimately banning most of them. The only ones to remain were those that did not threaten the party state. For instance, scientific and professional organizations could exist, but the Hungarian Geographical Society, which was considered anti-establishment, was prohibited from operating between 1949 and 1952. The framework for public action was provided by movements organized from above and controlled by the Patriotic People’s Front. Action at the grassroots level was severely limited or even expressly prohibited. Voluntary organizations were regulated by a law adopted in 1959, but it was not until 1987 that foundations were granted legal status. Yet, associations could be founded and operated under communism.

In 1989, Hungarians were granted freedom of association. This resulted in the creation of a multitude of organizations throughout the country after 1990; they may have numbered several tens of thousands ^{X.2.4.} The legal grounding for such organizations was created by legislation adopted in 1989, 1997, and 2011. Based on the ‘civil code’ of 2011, civil society organizations are approved and registered by the courts. Their operations remain subject to legal checks, and they must prepare annual reports. The law also defines the concept of public utility as the performance of a public task laid down in an organization’s articles of association and contributing to the satisfaction of the common needs of both society and the individual. Under Hungarian law, associations (excluding political parties, trade unions and mutual insurance associations), foundations, and societies that are created to





6 NUMBER OF ASSOCIATION MEMBERS BY TYPE OF SETTLEMENT (2020)

Type of settlement	Individual members	
	number	proportion (%)
Budapest	941,195	39.8
County seats	441,674	18.7
Other towns	617,220	26.1
Villages	363,036	15.4
Total	2,363,125	100.0

Under Hungarian law, civil society organisations may operate as foundations, public foundations, associations, clubs, interest representation organizations, non-profit business associations, and institutions. *Associations and foundations*, as classical civil society organizations, make up the largest proportion of such organizations. Their number increased rapidly after the change of system. The number of associations fell in the latter half of the 1990s, with their number stabilizing or slightly decreasing in the 2010s. Foundations, however, have declined sharply in number since 2010

X. 2. 4. The decrease in the number of non-profit organizations was greater in Budapest (an 18% decline between 2009 and 2020) than nationally (8%).

The participation of individuals in the activities of civil society organizations is indicated by the membership figures. Another key indicator is membership of such organizations per 10,000 people in a given district **X. 2. 5.** Such data reveal higher levels of civic engagement in the urbanized areas, especially in Transdanubia, although several districts in the Tiszántúl also exhibit above-average participation rates. Nearly 40% of individuals who are members of civil society organizations reside in Budapest, with a little more than 15% being rural dwellers **X. 2. 6.**

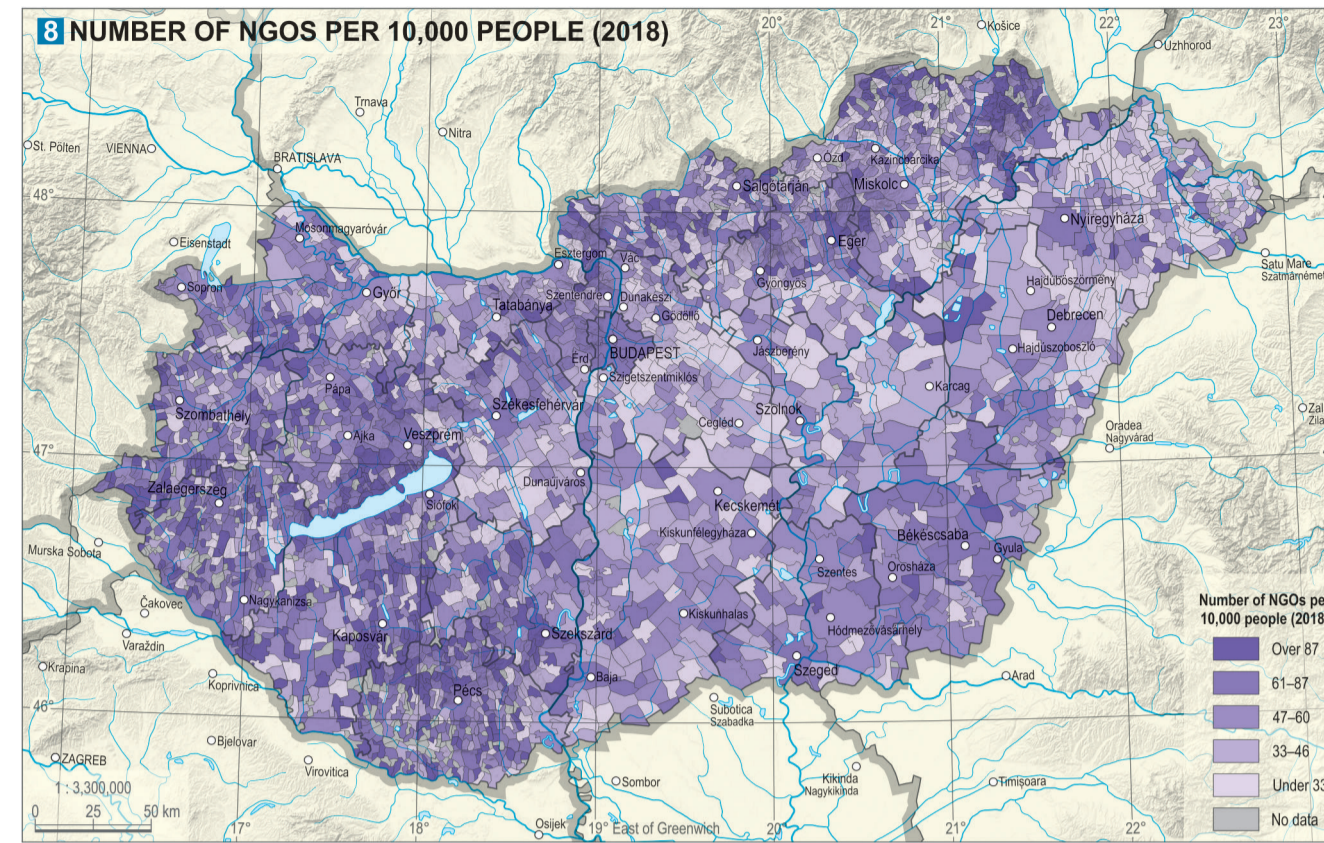
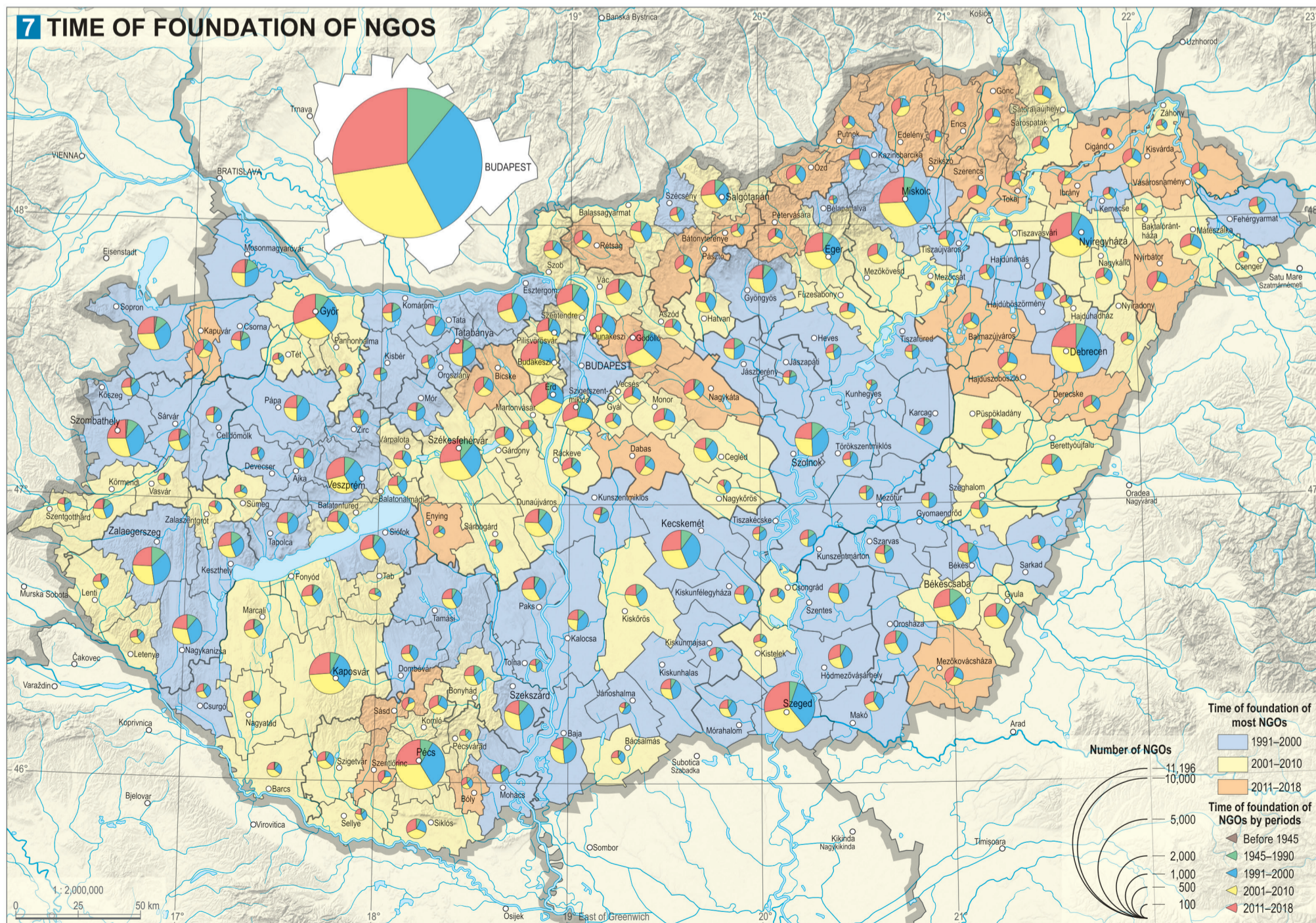
satisfy various interests and needs can be classified as civil society organizations. Although civil society organizations do not seek to make a profit, they are not synonymous with the non-profit sector, for the latter is a broader category that includes non-profit business associations, political party foundations, public foundations, sports associations and sports federations.

As citizens, individuals can participate in civil society either by joining an organization or through their own efforts. They can donate to or perform voluntary work for an organization. Alternatively, they can take action themselves. Compared with most European countries, Hungary exhibits low levels of civic engage-

ment. Few people in Hungary are actively involved in the work of civil society organizations. Volunteering is also relatively rare. The most usual form of action is the donation of money.

Civil society organizations

Civil society organizations in Hungary can be categorized based on various criteria. There are three basic types: 'classical' civil society organizations (associations and foundations), interest-representation groups, and non-profit enterprises. The classical civil society organizations are by the far the most numerous, accounting for nearly 90% of all civil society organizations.

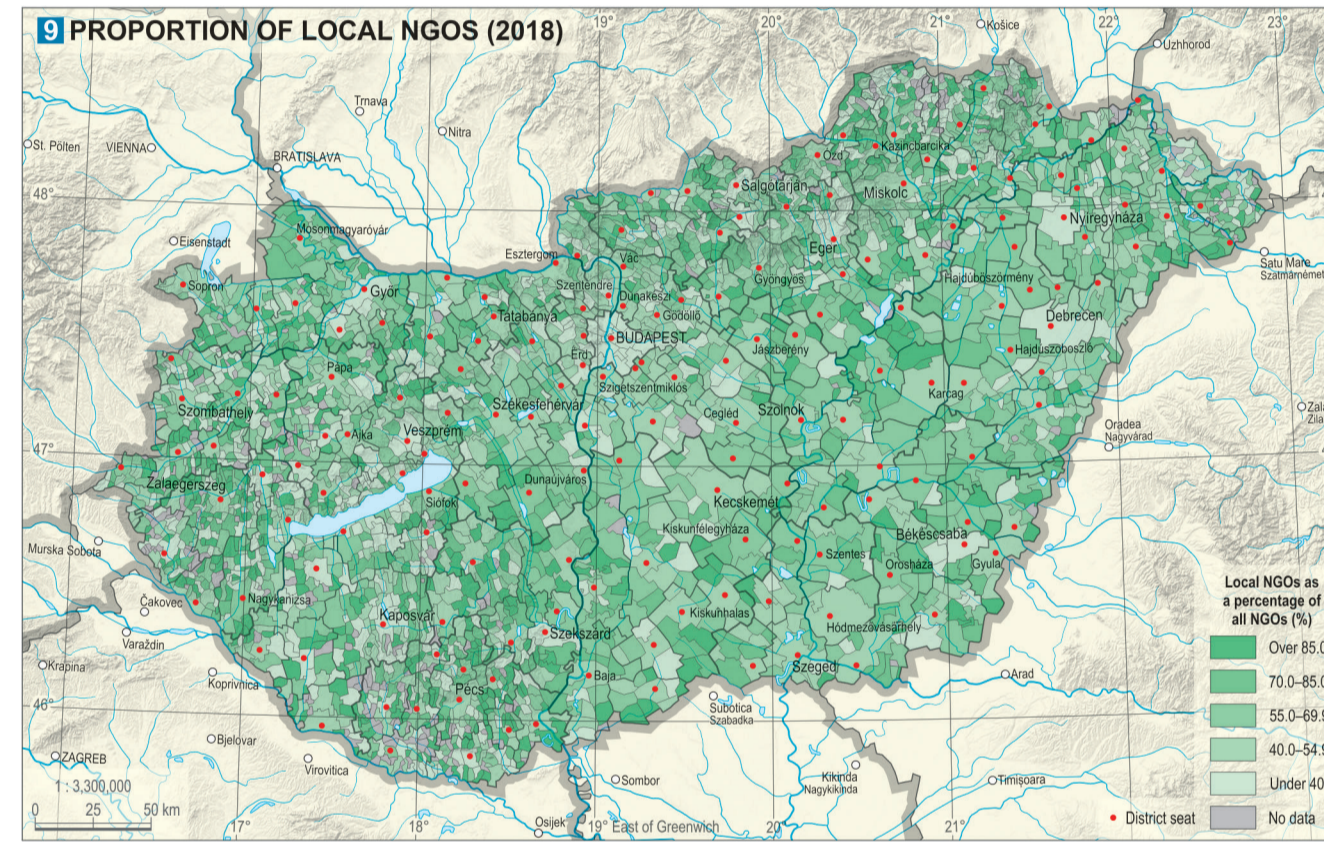


Noteworthy, the spatial pattern of the foundations differs from that of the associations. It corresponds more closely with the settlement hierarchy, as foundations are relatively more numerous than associations in towns with county rights and in other major urban centres. A similar trend can be observed in terms of the distribution of civil society organizations according to their scope: in the more populous cities and in the district seats, organizations with a national or regional scope operate in larger numbers. A common occurrence is that despite a scarcity of civil society organizations registered locally, some small settlements are the location for the activities of national or regional organizations. Accordingly, the proportion of national or regional organizations will be high there **X. 2. 9.**

Most civil society organizations have a single purpose (e.g. cultural, sports or leisure activities) **X. 2. 10.** **X. 2. 11.** **X. 2. 12.** Sometimes, however, a wide range of activities are performed. For instance, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta is involved in caring for the elderly, the homeless, and refugees, and it is also active in such fields as social care, education and healthcare.

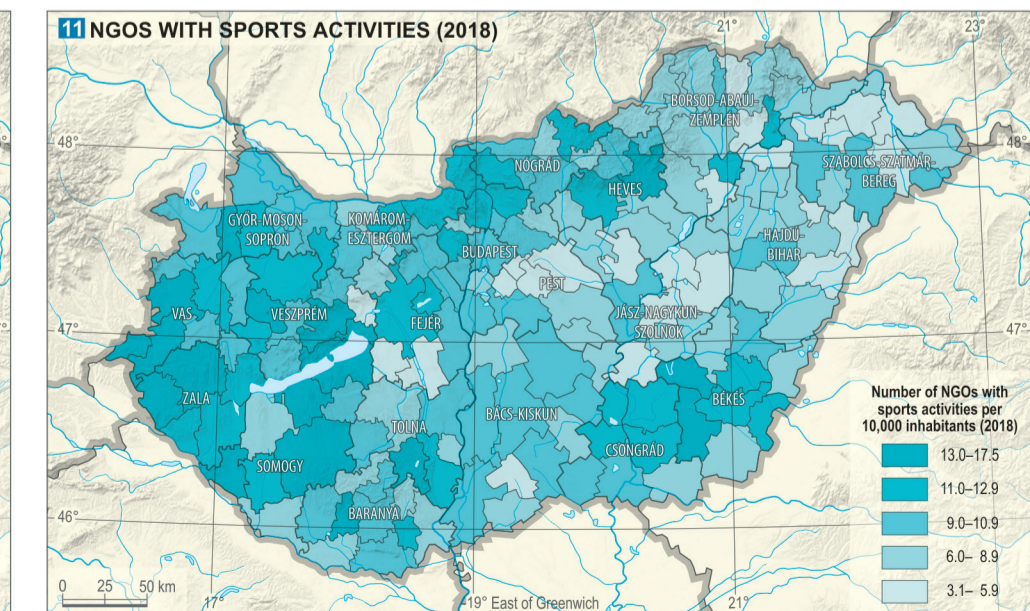
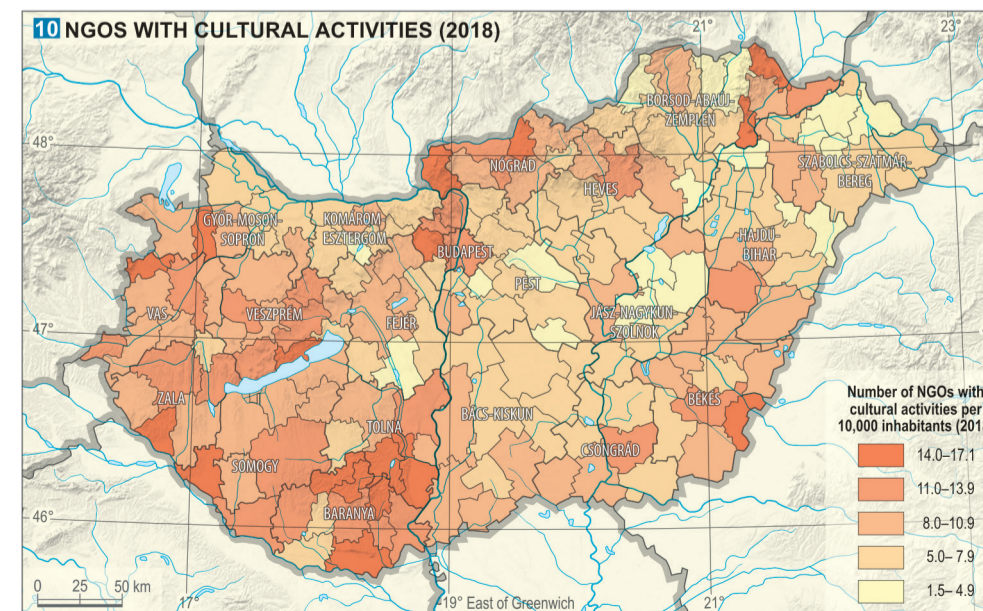
Funding of civil society organizations

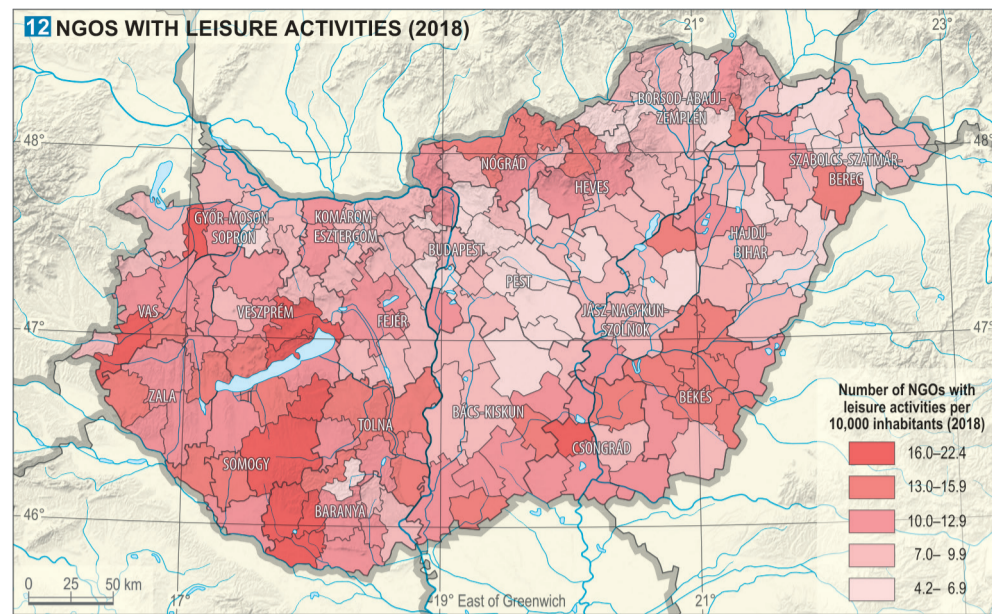
Adequate funding is essential for the operation of civil society organizations. Various sources of funding are available in Hungary, with the Hungarian state being the largest source (48%) in 2020. Normative budgetary support is funding granted by the state to civil society organizations in the form of a supplement that matches the donations received from other sources. Non-normative support comprises the funding received from the state or from local government in excess of this; it accounts for approximately 20% of the total income of civil society organizations in Hungary. State support can be task oriented, and it may comprise grants or ad hoc assistance. Funding stemming from corporate tax revenue accounts for about 3–8% of the total income of civil society organizations, while 1–3% of their total income comes from the 1% personal income tax donations. In absolute terms, revenue from the 1% donations peaked in the second half of the 2000s **X. 2. 13.** Regarding the 1% donations, differences within the settlement hierarchy are clearly discernible: in Budapest, the revenue from this source targeted at foundations and associations is the highest **X. 2. 14.**, and the sums offered are relatively high in more economically developed areas. **X. 2. 15.** Since 2014, the amount of state funding received by civil society organizations has increased significantly (by roughly a factor of three). Consequently, non-profit organizations are increasingly dependent on state funding. A further explanation for the increase is the creation of multiple public foundations in recent years, each of which receives substantial financial support from the state (e.g.



Although many civil society organizations were founded in the aftermath of the change of system, there are regions within the country where a greater number of such organizations were founded in another period. For example, in the northern parts of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, associations and foundations established between 2011 and 2018 constitute the largest share of the currently active ones. In this and other similar regions, the operation of civil society organizations is dependent on funding sources. Consequently, more foundations and associations are created when funding is readily available. Regarding the time of es-

tablishment, there is a difference between the associations and the foundations, with most foundations having been established between 2001 and 2018 **X. 2. 7.** Settlements in Transdanubia have a higher number of foundations and associations, relative to population numbers. To address the negative effects of mass tourism, many organizations have been created in the region with the aim of protecting and preserving the cultural and natural heritage. In rural areas with tiny villages, the number of organizations is relatively high, given the low population numbers (South Transdanubia and Northern Hungary) **X. 2. 8.**





activities (e.g. membership fees). In 2020, such revenue constituted 22% of their total income. In this regard, a marked difference can be observed between the western and eastern parts of the country (X. 2. 17) – and the difference is not solely related to the economic status of the given region. Income from membership fees reflects the relative activity rate of the local population, including membership of civil society organizations, as well as the scope of their activities.

In 2020, donations accounted for 12% of the total income of civil society organizations. Donations were far more significant in the early 1990s. Reflecting the diminishing role of tax allowances, private giving as a percentage of the total income in the sector underwent a decline. Even so, in absolute terms, private donations have been increasing ever since the early 1990s (as the value of money has decreased due to inflation). The largest shares of income from donations stem from corporations, private individuals and foreign sources.

Civil society organizations are also involved in funding activities, providing financial and in-kind support to people or organizations in need. The amount of such support per inhabitant will depend on the position of the town/city in the settlement hierarchy, as the headquarters of organizations providing financial support to the population are mostly located in the major cities. Even so, such organizations may well undertake activities in the surrounding areas or even nationally. In the case of the less populous districts, funding can be more substantial in the underdeveloped areas, where direct support is given to local people and organizations.

Case studies: civil society organizations in Hungary

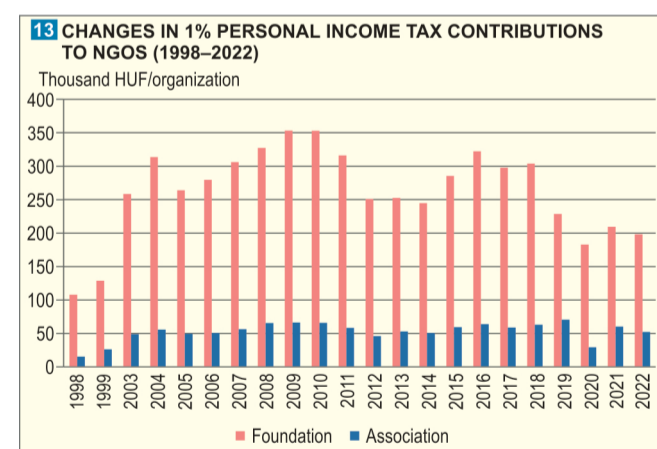
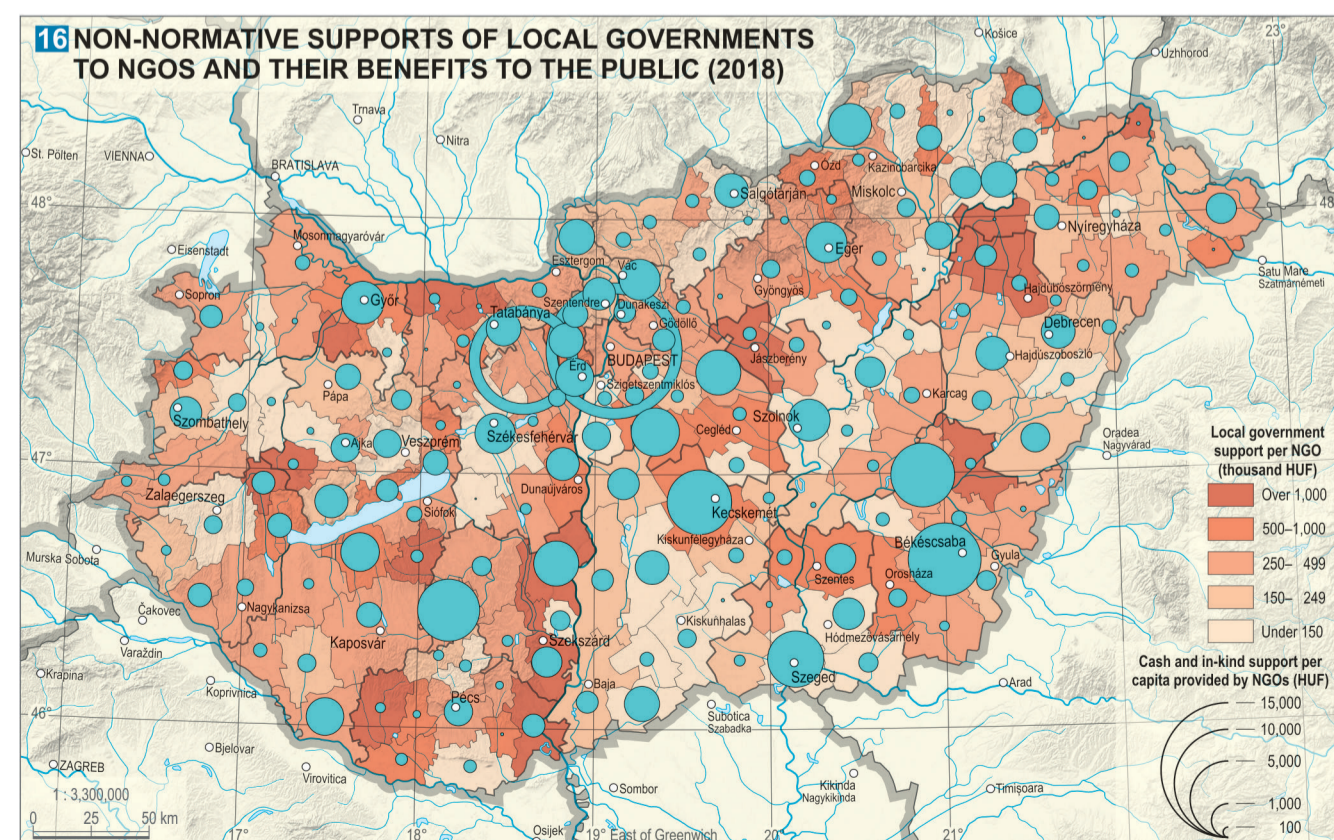
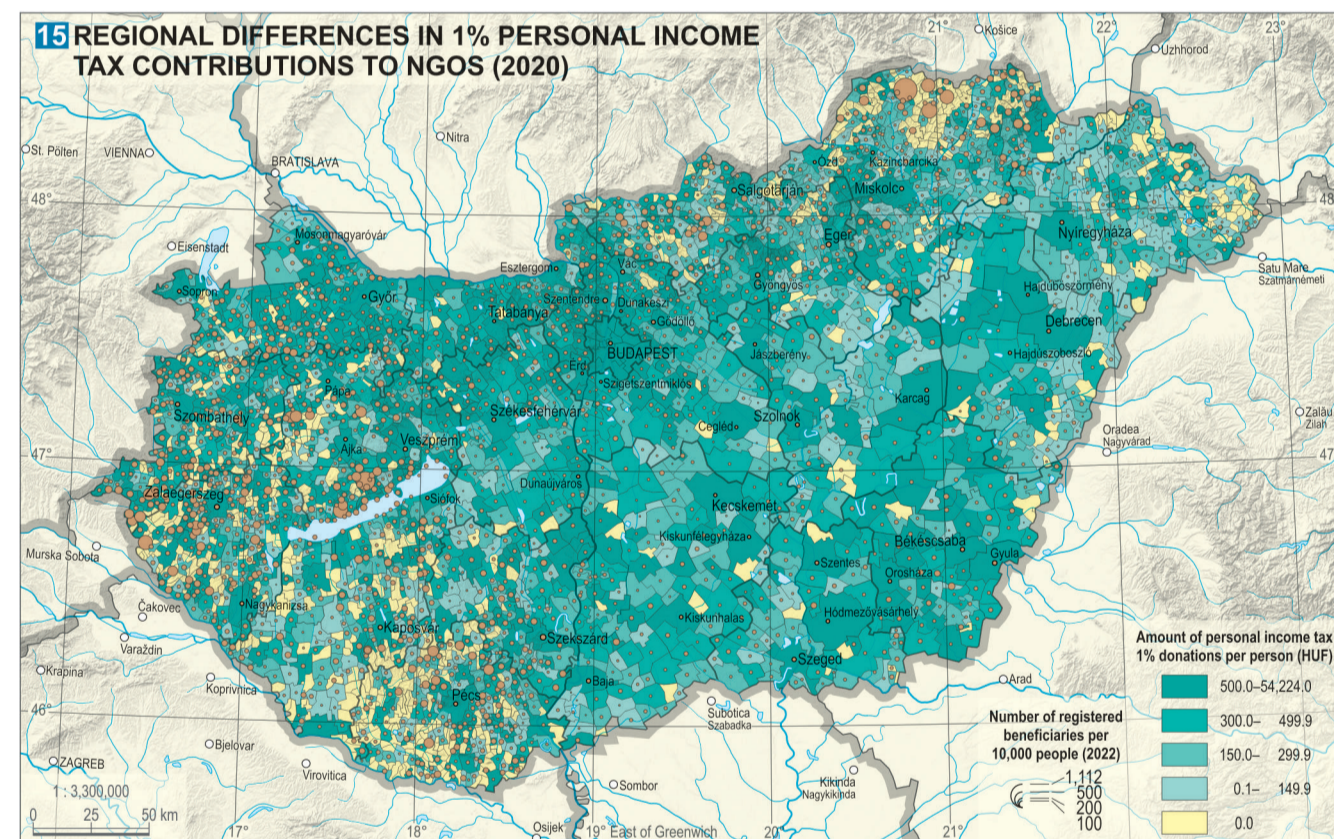
Two outstanding NGOs in Hungary are the Nationwide Civil Self-Defense Organizations and the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, both of which have been in operation for decades. Many peo-

the formerly state-funded universities which now operate as foundations).

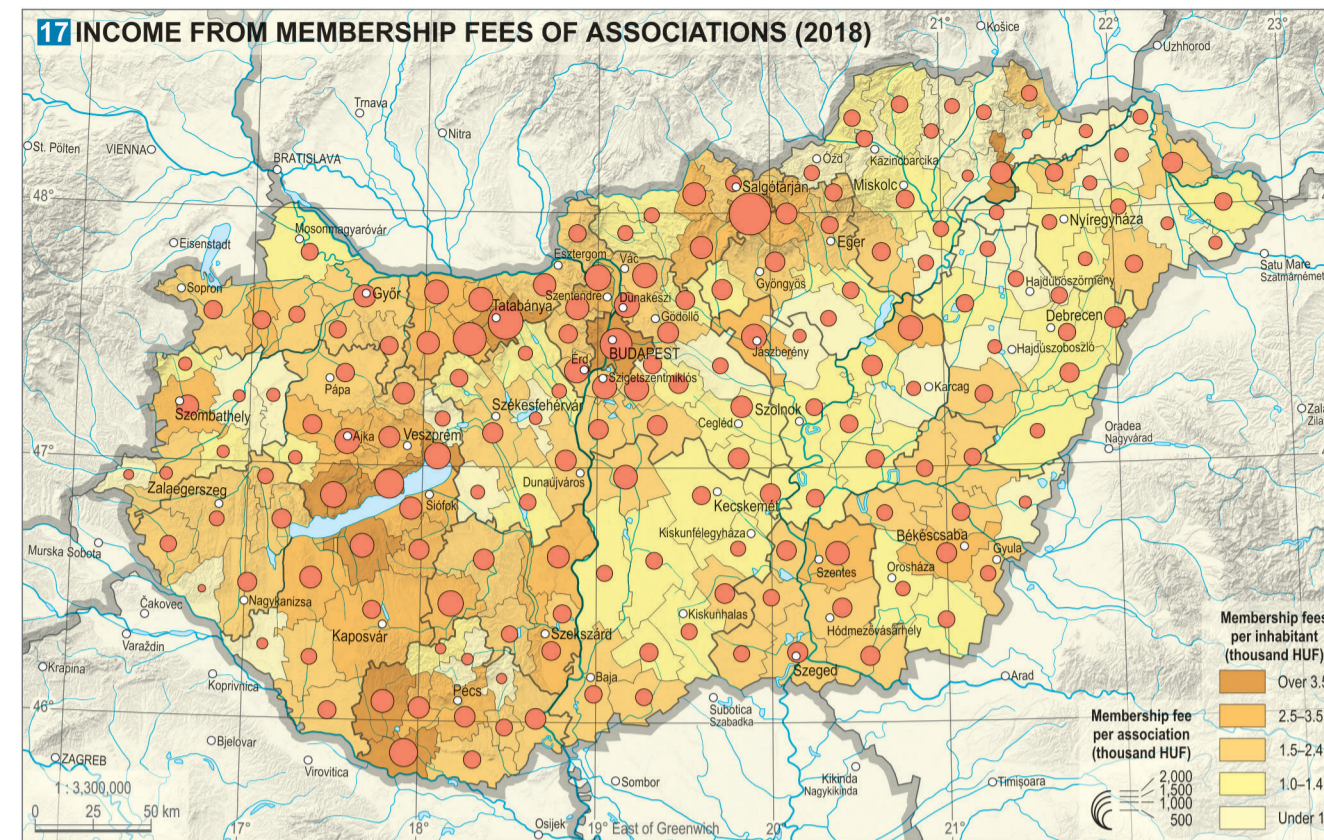
Local governments contribute to the civil society sector by providing direct support or by means of a competitive grant system. NGOs undertaking certain public tasks (e.g. education or social care) are more likely to receive funding from local governments. Funding for civil society organizations is relatively more plentiful in the county seats and other major urban centres, which offer non-normative support (i.e. funding that is not tied to the performance of a task). In Budapest, for instance, such funding amounted to more than HUF 5 billion in 2018. The amounts provided in the other major urban centres fell well short of this. At the same time, however, the amount of support provided by local governments per organization is higher in districts that include smaller settlements. The availability of local government funding depends on the income and demographic composition of the local population, the financial status of the local government, and the relative strength of local civil society. Where a municipality's revenues are higher in view of its tax revenue (e.g. the settlement is inhabited by people with higher incomes and/or many businesses are based there), it will have more opportunities to support civil society initiatives. An active local civil society is, however, a prerequisite for this. All of this reflects the strength of the relationship between local governments and civil society organizations in each region (X. 2. 16).

Civil society organizations can also benefit from their own revenues, including income from core ac-

ty organizations, as well as the scope of their activities. The membership fees of associations operating in fields that are more expensive (such as hunting or yachting) are much higher than those active in less expensive fields. Income from membership fees exhibits significant differences at certain levels of the settlement hierarchy, with Budapest's decisive role being clearly discernible (X. 2. 18). Income from economic activities is also a major source of funding, accounting for approximately 8–12% of total income. This includes income from commercial enterprises as well as from rent and the sale of tangible assets.



Type of settlement	Foundations		Associations	
	(million HUF)	%	(million HUF)	%
Budapest	2,193.7	64.4	439.4	44.8
County seats	507.4	14.9	195.8	20.0
Other towns	469.3	13.8	251.6	25.7
Villages	234.6	6.9	93.1	9.5
Total	3,405.0	100.0	979.9	100.0



Type of settlement	Membership fees	
	amount (million HUF)	proportion (%)
Budapest	9,038	35.3
County seats	4,102	16.0
Other towns	7,005	27.3
Villages	5,476	21.4
Total	25,621	100.0

ple are engaged in their activities, with their presence and impact being considerable at the local level.

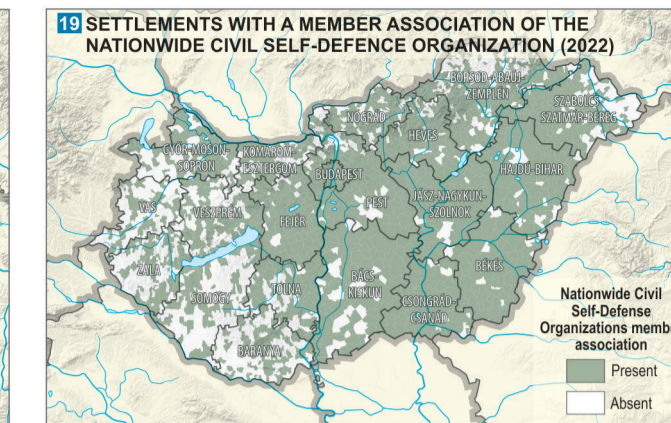
Nationwide Civil Self-Defense Organizations

The aftermath of the change of system saw the establishment of Hungary's largest civil society initiative, namely the Nationwide Civil Self-Defense Organizations (est. 1991). The NGO has at least one local branch in 54% of settlements. More than 90% of the country's population thus have access to this NGO, a force of nearly 65 thousand (X. 2. 19).

The presence or absence of the branch in a given settlement depends mainly on the characteristics of the settlement network. There is often no local branch in settlements in areas with tiny villages. In the more urbanized areas (VI. 7. 18), the NGO is present even in smaller settlements. This explains why the counties of Nógrád and Zala have the most intensive citizen guard networks at county level, both in terms of the number of associations and the number of citizen guards relative to the population. The tasks of the citizen guards include crime prevention, the provision of security at local events, policing the border, and general duties. The number of service hours per citizen guard is the highest in the counties of Békés and Hajdú-Bihar. In the eastern half of the country as a whole, this figure is typically higher than elsewhere in



2 The headquarters of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in Budapest



ations or foundations. A measure of the impact of such voluntary work at a civil society organization is the number of volunteers. This will reflect the location of the various foundations or associations. Sometimes the number of volunteers working in a district may be higher where there is a high ratio of foundations. Equally, the share of associations may be higher (X. 2. 22).

People living in poorer areas are more active in terms of their voluntary work. The explanation for this is possibly that there are more tasks to be resolved here – which activates people. Thus, for instance, in Northern Hungary and the northern part of the Alföld, the proportion of people doing voluntary work is remarkably high. In contrast, the corresponding share is lower in North Transdanubia and in Csongrád-Csanád County (X. 2. 23). In those areas, citizens typically refrain from undertaking voluntary work, having not been asked to perform it. As people are typically of the view that the tasks are the responsibility of the state, the spatial differences are considerable. (X. 2. 24)

Although each taxpayer in Hungary can donate 1% of their personal income tax to an eligible civil society organization, no more than around 33% of taxpayers make use of this opportunity. The proclivity to do so varies greatly from region to region, with the highest rates being registered in Budapest and Pest County, where 40% of the total amount of income from this source arises (X. 2. 25). Compared with the average, citizens tend to be more active in the capital city, where about 40% of taxpayers donate 1% of their personal income tax to civil society organizations. The corresponding figure in Northern and Northeastern Hungary is less than 30% (X. 2. 26). Since such organizations are basically dependent upon the income from taxpayers, in spatial terms the amounts received correspond to the differences in economic development. The number, ratio and amounts are higher in those areas where the employment rate is also favourable (X. 2. 27).

the country. The reason for this is the high number of border police tasks in the eastern counties, as they lie on the external border of the Schengen zone (X. 2. 20).

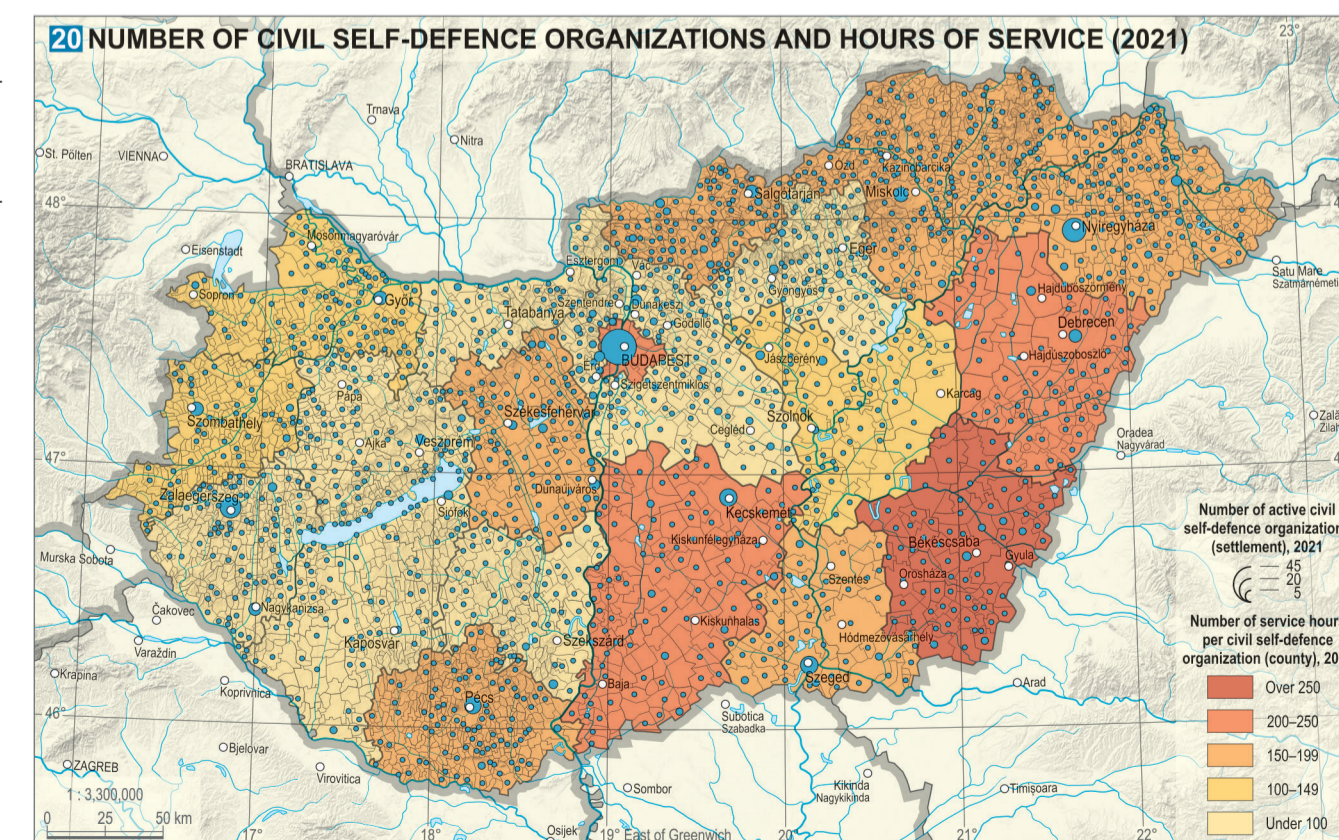
Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta

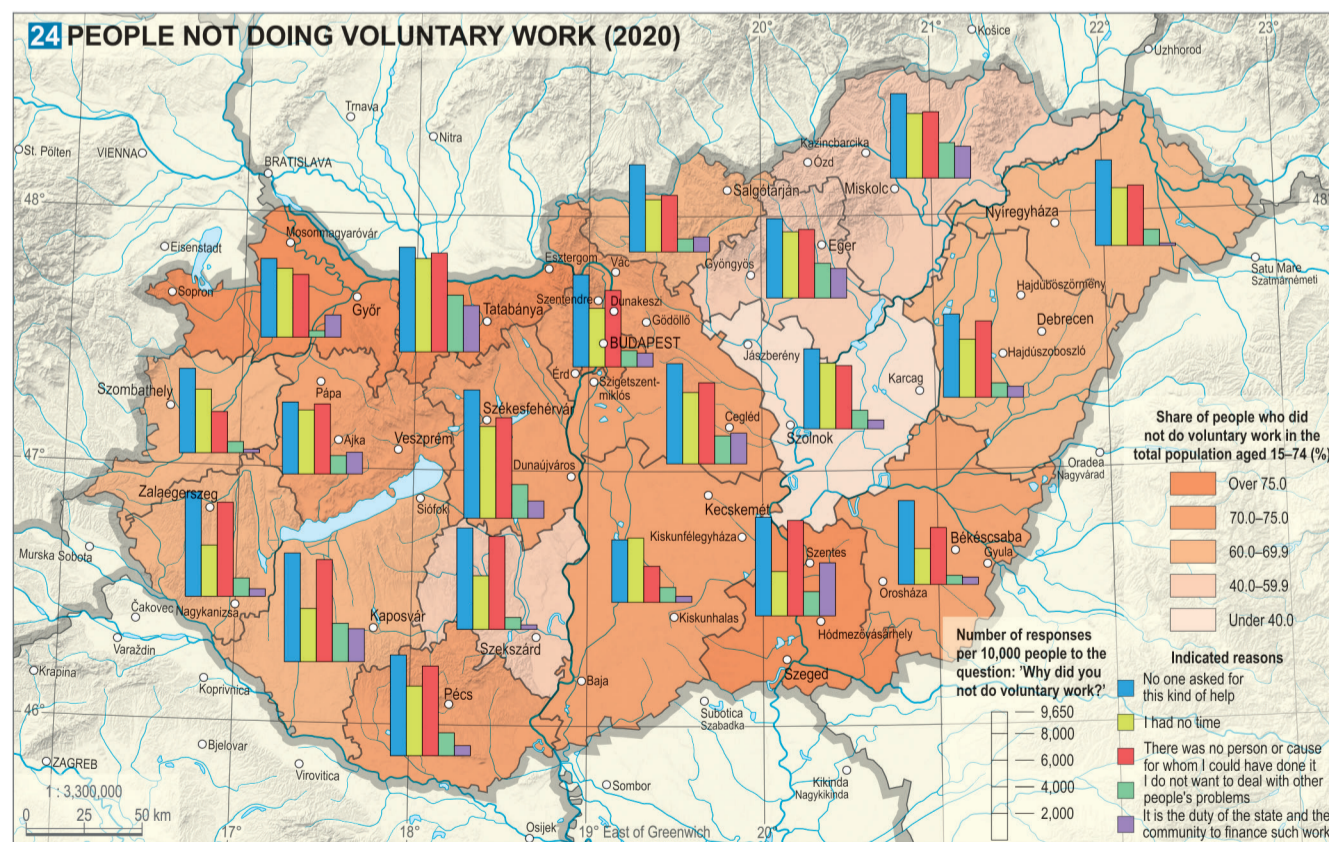
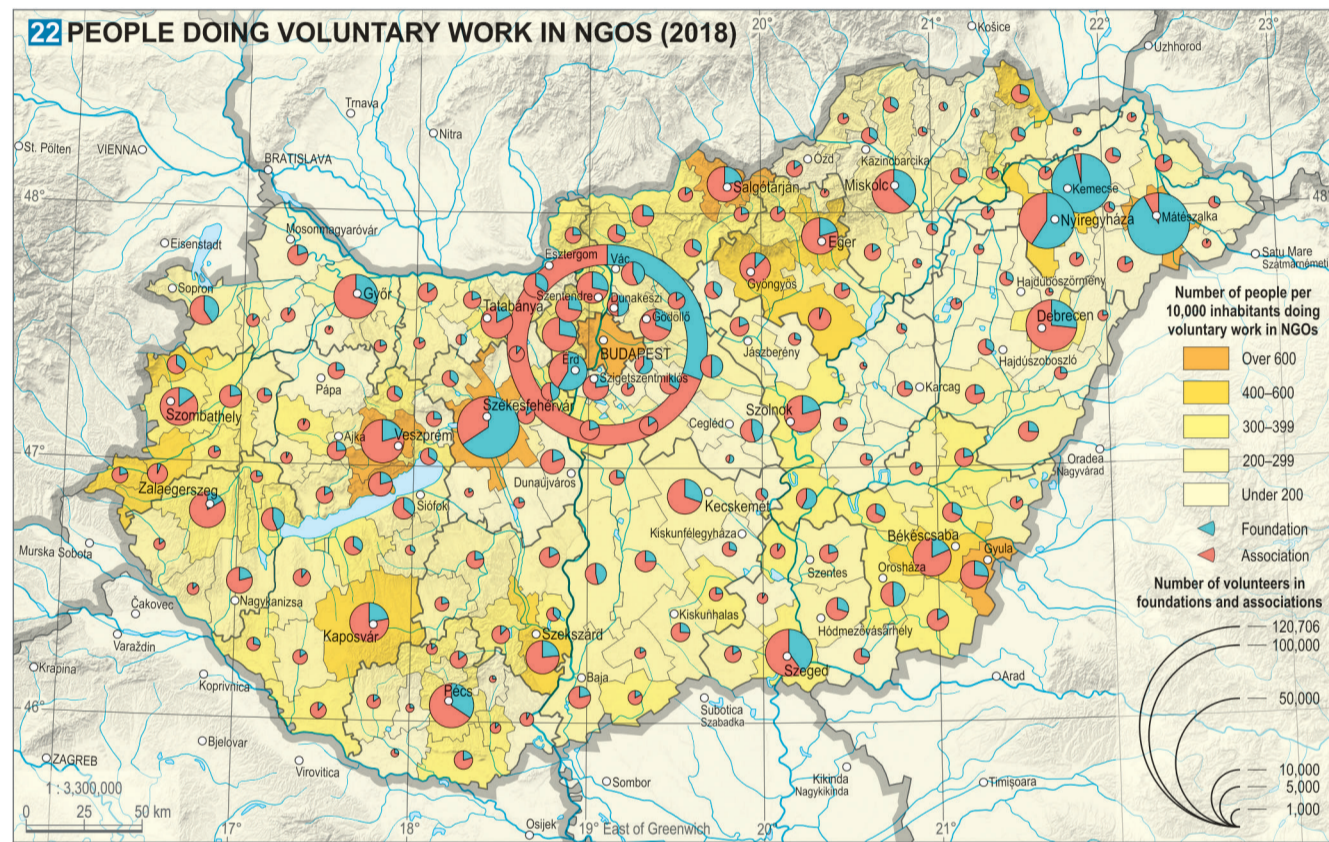
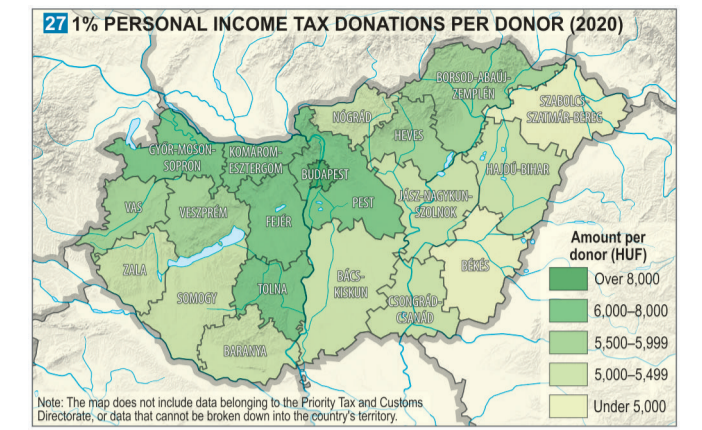
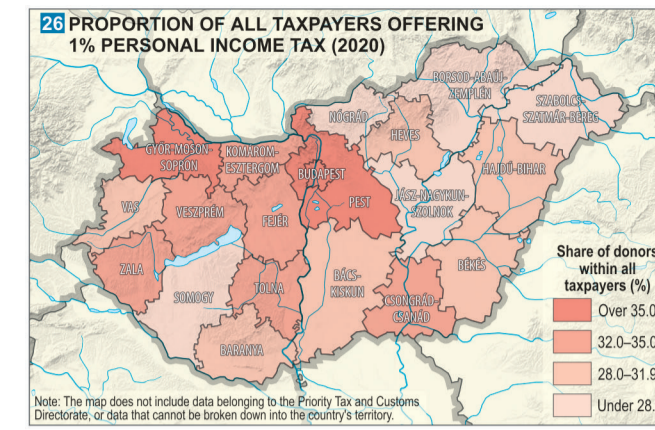
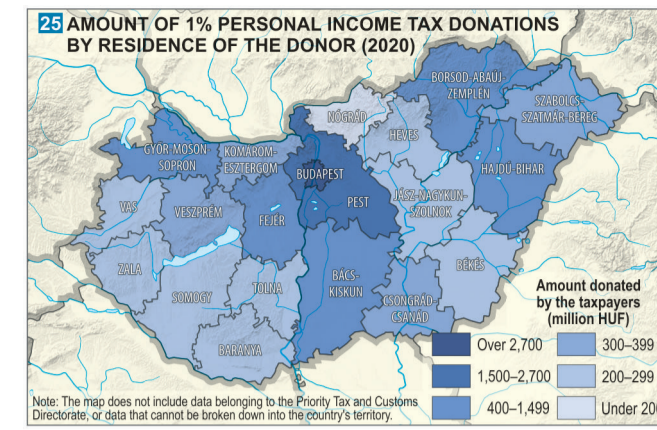
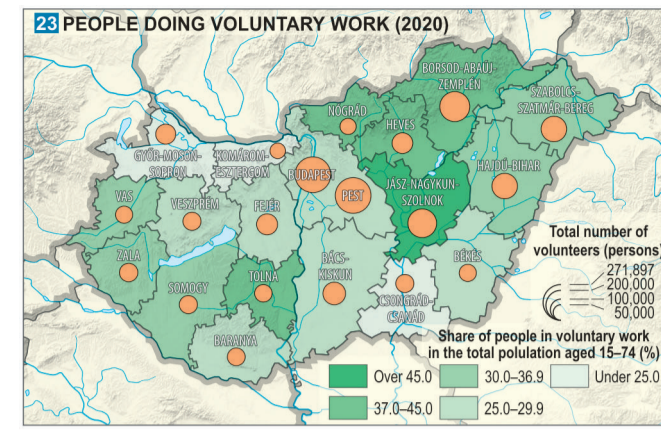
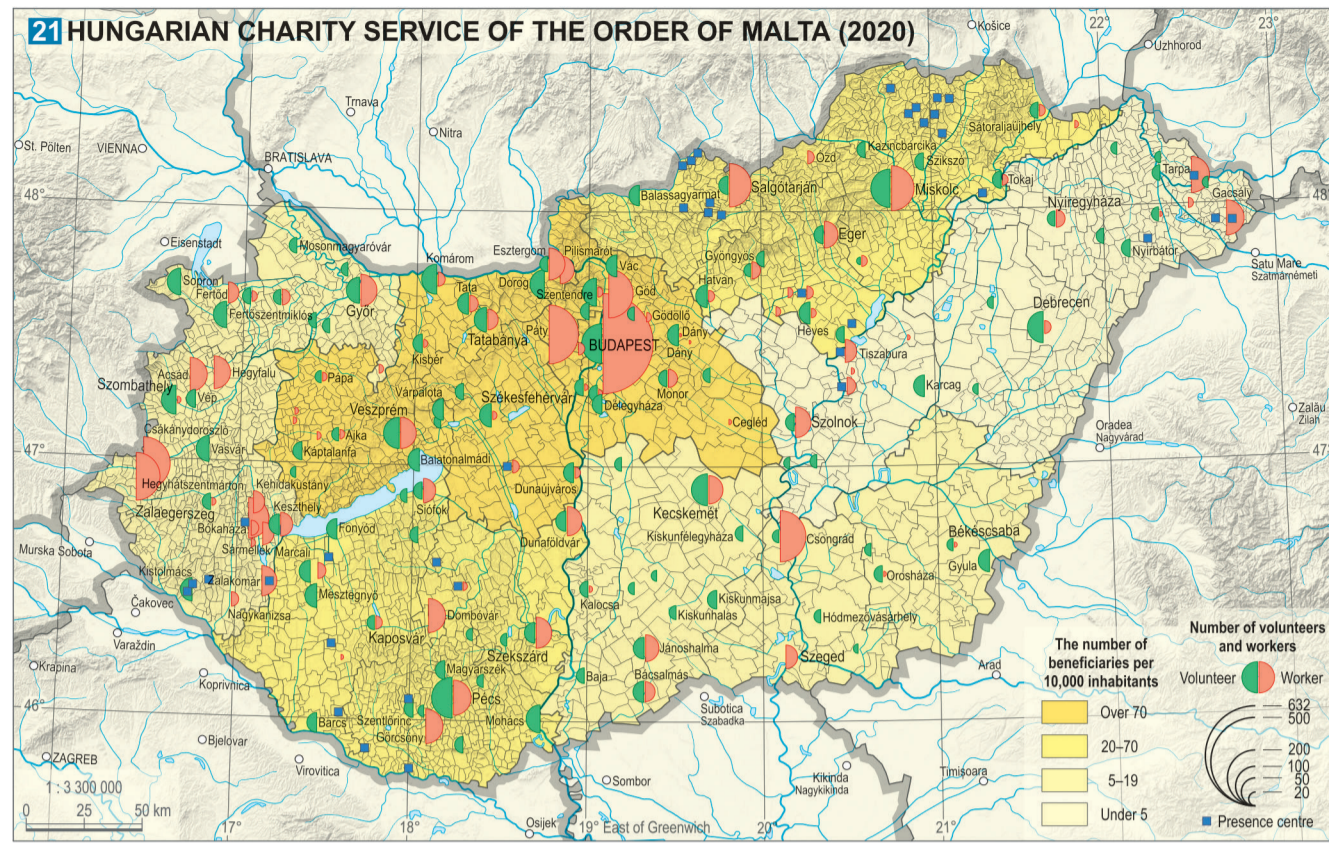
Founded on 4 February 1989, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta has become one of the largest NGOs in Hungary with more than 2,700 volunteers and almost 4,000 employees. Its volunteers and employees can be found throughout the country. All this indicates a willingness on the part of local people to help the organization (2). The number of volunteers per capita is higher in the western half of the country and in the major cities/towns. Even so, the organization's Presence programme has facilitated a presence even in small and disadvantaged towns, thereby enhancing community building and the provision of assistance in everyday life. People working at the Presence centres pay special attention to improving opportunities for local children, while ameliorating the effects of the inherent disadvantages (X. 2. 21).

Direct action by citizens

As well as participating in various organizations, citizens can also become engaged in civil society as individuals. The most common ways of doing so are volunteering or donating.

Citizens may undertake voluntary work at associ-





universal prohibition on civil society organizations greatly affected the Hungarian communities in the neighbouring countries. Yet, there were also occasions when the Communist Party created a Hungarian 'civilian' organization, which was then directed by the authorities (e.g. Csemadok in Czechoslovakia, est. 1949).

Since the change of system, many tasks have been performed by the Hungarian civil society organizations in the neighbouring countries. The main fields of activity are culture, education, language use and the protection of interests. All of these are fields that should be addressed by the given state, with a view to developing the individual and the community. In response to this situation and in order to strengthen ethnic culture, identity and a sense of belonging, the Hungarian state elaborated and implemented a national policy strategy from 2013 (*State Secretariat for National Policy, Prime Minister's Office*). When implementing this strategy, the government first created a central budgetary appropriation (*National Cooperation Fund*), which supports the work of civil society organizations. In early 2023, the Hungarian state supported 5,477 Hungarian civil society organizations in the Carpathian Basin beyond the country's borders, of which 52% were registered in Romania, 24% in Slovakia, 15% in Serbia, and 6% in Ukraine. Among these, 50% are cultural, 13% educational, and 10% youth organizations.

In *Transylvania*, there are 2,854 Hungarian civil society organizations, of which 62% are based in Székely Land, 18% in Partium, and 20% in other parts of Transylvania and the Banat. In terms of their activities, 44% are cultural organizations, 16% are educational organizations, and 11% are youth organizations. The Transylvanian Association of Hungarian Civil Organizations (est. 2004) seeks to coordinate the operation of nearly 14 thousand Hungarian NGOs in Transylvania. The umbrella youth organization is MIÉRT, the Hungarian Youth Conference (est. 2002), which has nearly 400 branch organizations in Transylvania. The Hungarian Teachers' Association of Romania (est. 1991) is an important body in the field of public education, while the Sapientia Foundation (est. 2000) promotes the work of the Hungarian private university network. The oldest Hungarian civil society organizations in Transylvania are the Transylvanian Museum Society (EME, 1859–1949, 1990–) and the Transylvanian Hungarian Educational Association (EMKE, 1885–1946, 1991–). A majority of the Hungarian civil society organizations operate in the 'cultural and economic capital' of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár), and in the larger Székely towns (50–65 Hungarian NGOs per 10 thousand Hungarian inhabitants, compared to the Hungarian average of 29 in Transylvania) X.2.30. The lowest level of civil society engagement in the Transylvanian Hungarian community can be observed in the Banat region and Partium, which are near the major towns of eastern Hungary. The only exception in this regard is Oradea (Nagyvárad), with 9–16 Hungarian civil society organizations per 10 thousand Hungarians.

In the Hungarian ethnic areas of *Slovakia*, there are

1,326 Hungarian civil society organizations (63% of which are active in the cultural/educational field). The major organizations include Csemadok (est. 1949), a cultural society of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, the Forum Minority Research Institute (est. 1996), the Association of Hungarian Teachers of Slovakia (est. 1990), the Association of Hungarian Parents in Slovakia (est. 2004), the Hungarian Scout Association of Slovakia (est. 1990), the Via Nova Youth Group (est. 2007), and Pro Civis (est. 2003). As many as 70% of Hungarian civil society organizations in Slovakia are based in the western parts of the country, with the largest number being found in Komárno (Komárom), Dunajská Streda (Dunaszerdahely), and Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. Other centres of civil society activity in Slovakia's Hungarian community are Kolárovo (Gúta), Šahy (Ipolytság), Filakovo (Fülelek), Rimavská Sobotka (Rimaszombat) and Veľké Kapušany (Nagykapos).

In the former Yugoslav territories, changes to the law enabled the creation of civil society organizations from 1982 onwards. The subsequent period saw the foundation of many Hungarian cultural and other organizations. In *Vojvodina*, 819 ethnic Hungarian civil society organizations currently receive funding from the Hungarian government. In comparison with elsewhere in the Carpathian Basin, the proportion of cul-

tural and educational organizations is low (35% and 10%, respectively). This reflects the fact that the Serbian state and the Vojvodina provincial government provide funding for educational and cultural tasks, with the level of funding being more substantial than the amounts received by the Hungarian minorities elsewhere in the Carpathian Basin. Umbrella organizations (e.g. the Association of Hungarian Civil Associations of Vojvodina, est. 2008; the Vojvodina Hungarian Cultural Association, est. 1992; and the Association of Professional Associations and Societies, est. 1965) play a vital role in coordinating the work of multiple organizations. Most Hungarian civil society organizations operate in the northern part of the Bačka region and in the provincial seat, Novi Sad. The highest rate of civil society activity (50–90 civil organizations/10 thousand Hungarians) can be observed in this area.

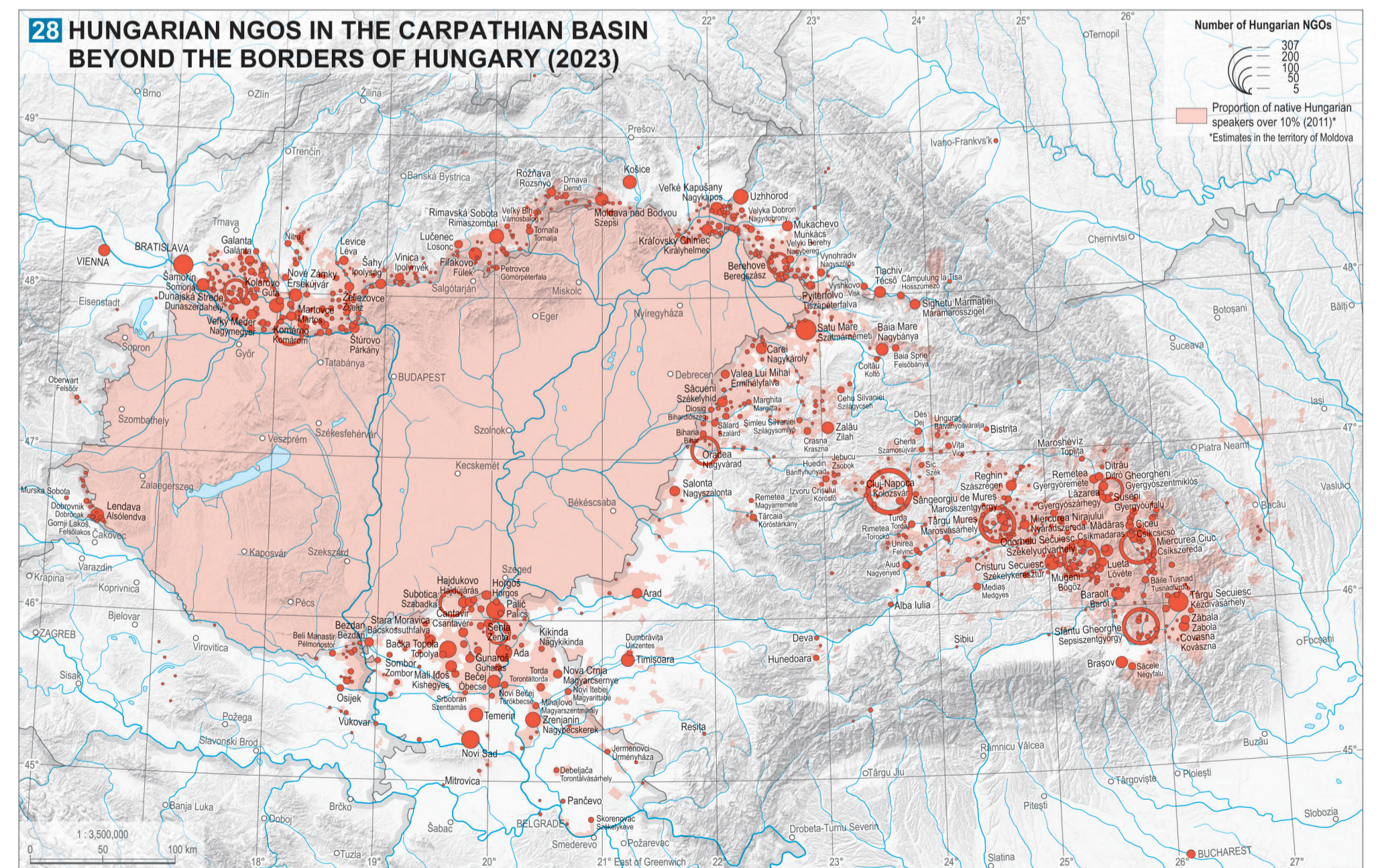
Many civil society organizations are active in the Hungarian community in *Zakarpattia*, Ukraine. The oldest and largest organization is the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Zakarpattia, which was established in 1989 and promotes the interests of ethnic Hungarians in the region. Sixty-four of the 342 supported organizations are affiliated with the Cultural Alliance. Almost half of the civil society organizations serve cultural purposes. In view of the grave economic situation, how-

ever, a relatively large proportion are devoted to social topics. Most of the organizations operate in the largest Hungarian communities (Berehovo/Beregszász, Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Tiachiv).

In the Pannonian areas of *Croatia*, 70 civil society organizations of the local ethnic Hungarians (9,217 in 2021) receive funding from Hungary. Three-quarters of them are active in the cultural field, with two-thirds operating in South Baranja. The largest umbrella organizations – the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Croatia (est. 1993) and the Central Association of Hungarian Associations (est. 1998) – are based in the same region. The main centre for journalists, teachers, and linguists from the Hungarian community is Osijek, while the main academic centre is the capital, Zagreb.

The estimated 5,000 Hungarians living in *Slovenia's Prekmurje* region operate 59 civil society organizations, half of which are active in the cultural sphere. As many as 40% are based in Lendava (Alsólendva), at the heart of the mixed-language border region.

The Hungarian community in *Austria's Burgenland* has grown in recent times, with new arrivals from Hungary and Romania. The community currently comprises around 12,000 people. Yet, there are just five civil society organizations, two of which are based in Oberwart (Felsőőr) and one in Unterwart (Alsóőr).



Hungarian civil society organizations abroad in the Carpathian Basin

Being an active member of a Hungarian civil society organization means something completely different in one of the adjacent states than it does in Hungary.

In the Hungarian ethnic minority communities, such engagement can be a way of expressing one's Hungarian identity. In the interwar period the neighbouring states sought to impose restrictions on the functioning of the civil society organizations of the minority ethnic Hungarian populations. Under communism, the near-

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English translation revised by

Andrew Gane, Gábor Gercsák

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Authors

IVÁN BÁBA

JÁNOS BÁRTH M.

ZSOMBOR BARTOS-ELEKES

JÓZSEF BENEDEK

KRISZTINA BICZÓ

ÁDÁM BOLLÓK

LAJOS BOROS

BALÁZS BORSOS

LÁSZLÓ BUGA

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DEZSŐ JUHÁSZ

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MLADEN KLEMENČIČ

KÁROLY KOCSIS

SÁNDOR KÓKAI

ZOLTÁN KOVÁCS

TAMÁS KOVALCSIK

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ILDIKÓ VADÁL

LÁSZLÓ VÁRKONYI

NÁNDOR ZAGYI

LÁSZLÓ ZENTAI

Authors of maps and figures

† JENŐ BARABÁS

JÁNOS BÁRTH M.

JÓZSEF BENEDEK

ZOLTÁN BERTUS

KRISZTINA BICZÓ

ÁDÁM BOLLÓK

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Chief cartographers

FANNI KOCZÓ

ANIKÓ KOVÁCS

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