

# HUNGARY AND THE HUNGARIANS

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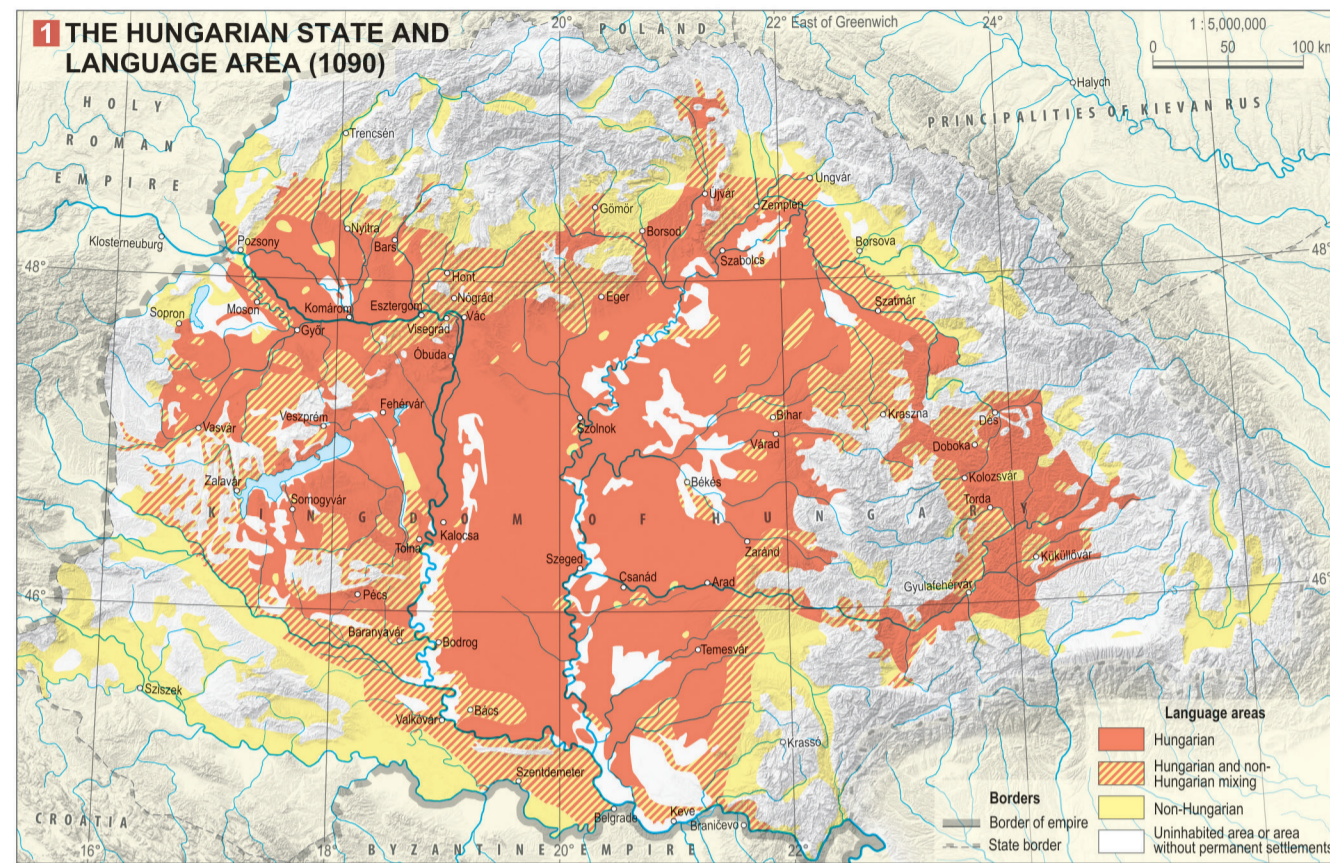
Both the global spatial distribution of the European peoples and the relationship between their autochthonous settlement areas and the current extent of their nation-states exhibit substantial differences. In consequence of international migration as well as changes in the national borders, some ethnic and linguistic communities (e.g. the Irish, Portuguese, Scots, Italians) live predominantly outside their own nation-states. In many other cases, 30–50% of the community lives beyond the borders of the state (e.g. people of Greek, French, Swedish, Polish, Ukrainian, and Serbian descent). This latter category also include the Hungarians with an estimated population of 14.2 million, only *two-thirds of whom live in the present-day territory of Hungary*. The extent to which the autochthonous settlement area of a particular nation coincides with the territory of its state depends both on migration patterns and on changes to national boundaries. In the eastern half of Europe, the current national borders arose mainly in the wake of the two world wars and following the dissolution of the multinational states (1991–1999). The national borders are rarely aligned with the linguistic and ethnic boundaries. Accordingly, the autochthonous settlement area of a given ethno-linguistic community can be larger or smaller than the extent of its nation-state. *Hungary's present-day territory is significantly smaller than the autochthonous settlement area of Hungarians*. The peace treaties (1920, 1947) that followed defeat in two world wars left the country with no more than a third of its thousand-year-old historical territory. Consequently, in 2022, 1.9 million of the 4.8 million Hungarians residing outside Hungary were living in the *territories annexed in 1920* by adjacent states. Meanwhile, some 2.9 million live in the émigré diaspora (mostly in North America and Western Europe).

## Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin

It is difficult to reconstruct the exact extent of the Hungarian state throughout the period from the Hungarian conquest until the emergence of the modern nations in the 19th century. Determining the settlement area of ethnic Hungarians during this lengthy period is an even more formidable task. As far as the medieval and early modern period is concerned and in view of changes in the meaning of 'natio' and ethnicity, the most we can do is identify areas predominantly inhabited by Hungarian speakers. To accomplish this, we need to piece together various considerations and sources (e.g. the origins of geographical names, a linguistic analysis of taxpayer surnames, monographs on the history of places, the data found in place name registers).

## The medieval Hungarian state (895–1526)

The Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin took place between the late 9th century and the mid-10th century, giving rise to a Hungarian principality. According to historians, the estimated population of this region at that time was no more than 600 thousand, of whom possibly as many as 400 thousand had taken part in the conquest. The Hungarian Christian kingdom was founded by Stephen I of Hungary in the aftermath of the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire. It was at this time that the borders of the Hungarian state



was stabilized along the Carpathian ranges and in the foothills of the Eastern Alps. In the mid-11th century, the area of the Kingdom of Hungary was ca. 330 thousand sq. km. This included the entire settlement area of the Hungarians, which, based on Knieszsa's map, covered a territory of 123 thousand sq. km (i.e. roughly two-thirds of the inhabited area of the Carpathian Basin). During this period, 42% of the country's territory

was still uninhabited **1 2**. The settlement area of the Hungarians in the 11th century extended throughout the lowlands, the Transylvanian Basin, the strategic river valleys, and the lower upland areas.

In 1091, Croatia became a part of the Kingdom of Hungary, with a personal union being established in 1102 that would last until 1918. In the 12th to 15th centuries, some northern Balkan territories were also

**2 PROPORTION OF HUNGARIANS IN THE TERRITORY AND POPULATION OF THE CARPATHIAN BASIN AND THE HUNGARIAN STATE (1090–2011)**

Year	Carpathian Basin			Hungarian State (Between 1090 and 1910 the countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown)						
	Territory (sq. km)			Population (thousand people)		Territory (sq. km)			Population (thousand people)	
	Total	Hungarian language area	Uninhabited	Total	Hungarian speaker	Total	Hungarian language area	Uninhabited	Total	Hungarian speaker
1090	311,099	123,425	119,900	1,000	700	329,623	148,853	137,310	1,100	700
1495	311,099	135,102	93,032	3,100	2,050	354,462	135,010	97,923	3,500	2,050
1590	311,099	111,689	100,640	3,762	1,759	202,013	66,206	71,143	2,624	1,200
1787	311,099	93,386	77,125	9,210	3,250	324,281	93,386	82,620	9,362	3,250
1880	311,099	110,335	47,805	15,322	6,441	325,411	110,335	53,296	15,642	6,445
1910	311,099	117,073	47,792	20,414	10,035	325,411	117,073	53,255	20,886	10,051
1930	311,099	112,328	47,865	22,723	10,526	93,073	80,365	6,522	8,688	8,001
1941	311,099	115,905	47,865	24,305	11,953	172,204	111,001	20,228	14,683	11,365
1960	311,099	114,319	47,945	26,335	12,508	93,023	86,036	6,468	9,961	9,837
1990	311,099	112,654	48,262	30,200	12,843	93,023	86,135	6,471	10,375	10,142
2011	311,099	109,563	47,865	28,540	11,830	93,023	85,560	6,522	9,938	9,741

Year	Carpathian Basin			Hungarian State (Between 1090 and 1910 the countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown)						
	Territory (%)			Population (%)		Territory (%)			Population (%)	
	Total	Hungarian language area	Uninhabited	Total	Hungarian speaker	Total	Hungarian language area	Uninhabited	Total	Hungarian speaker
1090	100	40.0	38.8	100	70.0	100	45.2	41.7	100	63.6
1495	100	43.8	30.1	100	66.1	100	38.1	27.6	100	58.6
1590	100	35.9	32.3	100	46.7	100	32.8	35.2	100	45.7
1787	100	30.3	25.0	100	35.3	100	28.8	25.5	100	34.7
1880	100	35.7	15.5	100	42.0	100	33.9	16.4	100	41.2
1910	100	37.9	15.5	100	49.2	100	36.0	16.4	100	48.1
1930	100	36.4	15.5	100	46.3	100	36.3	7.0	100	92.1
1941	100	37.5	15.5	100	49.2	100	64.5	11.7	100	77.4
1960	100	37.0	15.5	100	47.5	100	92.5	7.0	100	98.8
1990	100	36.5	15.6	100	42.5	100	92.6	7.0	100	97.8
2011	100	35.5	15.5	100	41.5	100	92.0	7.0	100	98.0

linked with the Hungarian state. Accordingly, in the first half of the 13th century, the Kingdom of Hungary had an approximate territory of 390 thousand sq. km.

In the 11th to 13th centuries, the area inhabited by Hungarians spread up the river valleys towards the mountainous periphery of the country. In Transylvania, this process was a consequence of the settlement of the Székelys. It was also during this period that the first substantial Hungarian communities appeared on the far side of the Southern Carpathians, in Wallachia. Following the Mongol invasion (1241–1242) and the arrival of many Romanian speakers in the area, these southern Hungarian communities steadily declined in subsequent centuries. The founding of a Romanian state in Moldova to the east of the Carpathians was followed by an influx of Hungarian speakers into that region. This was followed by several waves of Hungarian migration from Transylvania to Moldavia. The descendants of these Hungarians (the Csángós) still preserve their Catholic faith and, to a lesser extent, their archaic Hungarian language.

The 13th and 14th centuries also saw the settlement of Cumans (Kun) and Jasz people in the sparsely inhabited central parts of the Alföld. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the territory ruled by Hungarian kings was, at times, much larger than the Carpathian Basin. (e.g. at the end of their reigns, Louis the Great ruled over 627 thousand sq. km, Matthias Corvinus ruled over 495 thousand sq. km of territory).

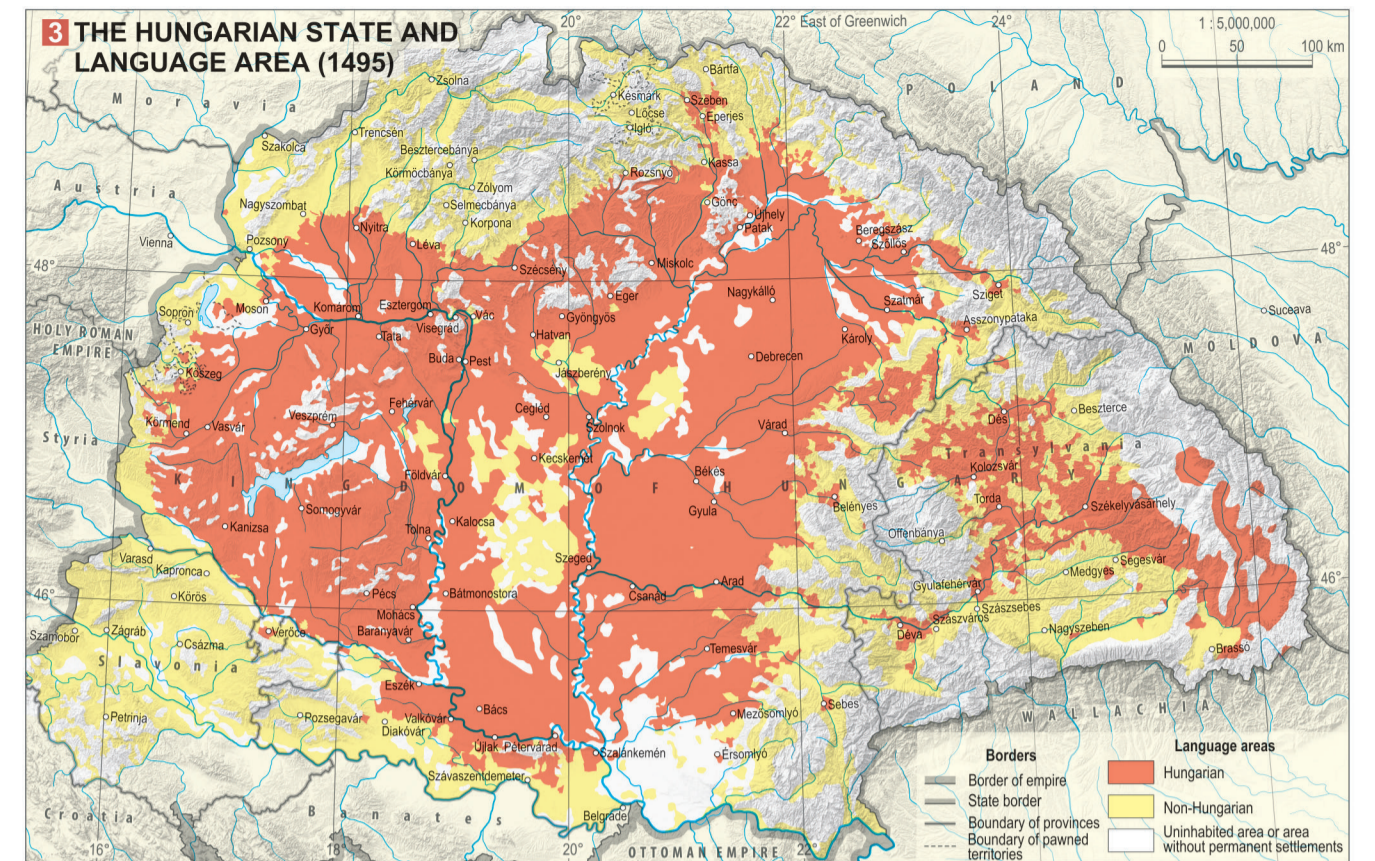
In the late 15th century, the area of the Kingdom of Hungary decreased to 356 thousand sq. km, which, however, still included the entire Hungarian-speaking area (except for the Hungarians of Moldova). In 1495, 66% of the 3.1 million inhabitants of the Carpathian Basin likely spoke Hungarian **3**. The language areas of the non-Hungarian groups expanded greatly in the final centuries of the Middle Ages. This process reflected the settlement of non-Hungarians in the region by the kings and private individuals, the devastating wars, civil strife, and epidemics.

## Tripartite Hungary (1526–1690)

In the Battle of Mohács (1526), which ended with the death of the reigning Hungarian monarch (Louis II, r. 1516–1526), the Ottomans proceeded to destroy the Hungarian army. The Kingdom of Hungary, which until then had been a medium power in Europe, subsequently declined in status. By the late 16th century, the Ottoman Empire had occupied 43% of the territory of the medieval Hungarian state, including its core area.

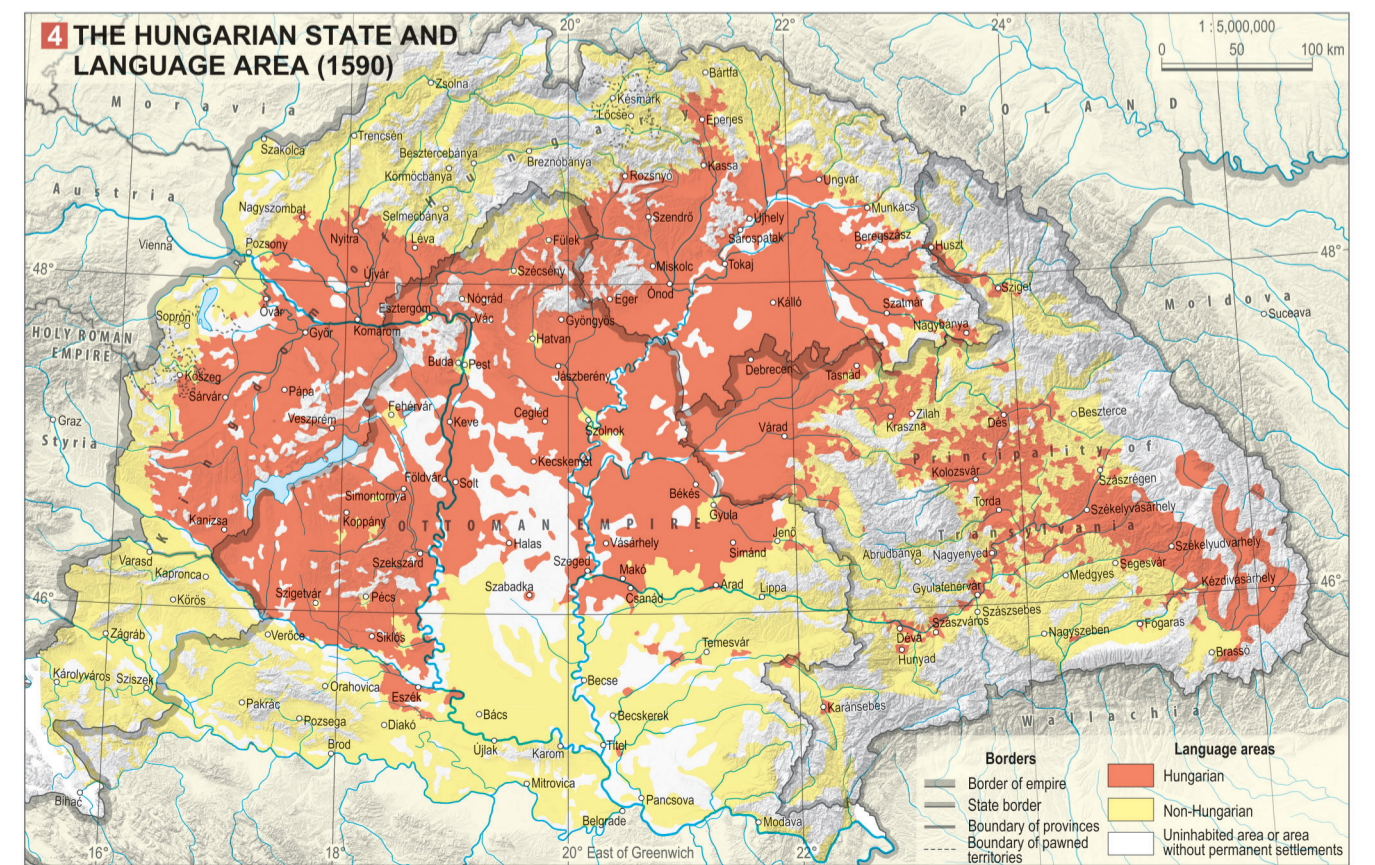
Hungary's remaining territory was divided into two parts, each ruled by one of the two Hungarian kings elected in late 1526. The western and northern counties came under the rule of Ferdinand of Habsburg, while the eastern parts were subject to John Szapolyai (John I). From 1570 until the cessation of its independence in 1690, the 'eastern Hungarian Kingdom' was known as the Principality of Transylvania. This state kept the spirit of independent Hungarian statehood alive despite its status as an Ottoman vassal.

Between 1495 and 1590, the population of the Carpathian Basin increased from 3.1 million to 3.7 million. At the same time, however, the number of Hungarians is thought to have declined from 2 million to 1.8 million (i.e. from 66% to around 47% of the total population). Although the area inhabited mostly by Hungarian-speakers and the number of Hungarians increased substantially in many places during the 16th century (with the assimilation of the Cumans and Jasz people in the Alföld and the influx of Hungarian refugees into various towns in Upper Hungary and in Transylvania), such increases could not compensate for the almost



complete disappearance of Hungarians in the southern regions **4**. Several events facilitated or hastened the destruction of the Hungarian population in the south, including the defensive battles fought against the Turks from the 15th century onwards, the peasants' war of Dózsa (1514), various Ottoman campaigns, the mass flight of the Hungarians, and the seizure of people as slaves by the Ottomans.

During the 16th century, both the country and the Hungarian language area were divided into three parts. The combined territory of Royal (Habsburg) Hungary and Transylvania (i.e. the two remnant areas of the Christian Hungarian state) declined to 202 thousand sq. km. Around 1590, their combined population is estimated to have been 2.6 million, 46% of whom may have spoken Hungarian. Royal Hungary (including Croatia) had possibly 1.6 million inhabitants, including 723 thousand (45.2%) Hungarians, while the Principality of Transylvania had 1 million inhabitants, including 477 thousand (46.5%) Hungarians. Ottoman Hungary is estimated to have had a population of 1.1 million in 1590. This figure is derived from information contained in the Ottoman tax censuses of the latter half of the 16th century. According to the taxpayers' names the number and share of Hungarians is estimated to have been 556 thousand and 50.5%.



Swathes of depopulated land arose in the central parts of the Hungarian-speaking area. These areas had formerly been covered by a dense network of Hungarian and Cuman settlements.

In Transylvania, the Hungarian population was decimated and the Hungarian settlement area was disintegrated by the Habsburg, Wallachian-Moldovan, Ottoman, and Tatar campaigns of the periods 1599–1604 and 1657–1661. Consequently, during the latter half of the 17th century, the Hungarians of Transylvania became less numerous than the Romanians, who lived in the more protected mountainous areas and whose numbers were steadily increasing.

## The entire country as a part of the Habsburg Empire (1690–1867)

In the aftermath of the failed Turkish siege of Vienna (1683) and the Peace of Passarowitz (1718), Ottoman rule was ended in nearly 140 thousand sq. km of territory north of the rivers Danube and Sava. Yet no more than 54% of this liberated territory was returned to Hungary. Approximately 23 thousand sq. km became part of Croatia and Slavonia, while the Banat (28,523 sq. km) and Transylvania as a grand principality (62,200 sq. km) came under the direct rule of the Court Chancellery in Vienna, as did the southern military frontier



(which was established as a separate administrative unit). After the first partition of Poland (1772), the 13 towns of the Szepes (Zips) region, which had been given in pledge to the king of Poland in 1412, and in 1778 the part of the Banat lying outside the military frontier (19,082 sq. km) were returned to Hungary. In 1779, Maria Theresa ceded Fiume as an autonomous port city to the Hungarian crown.

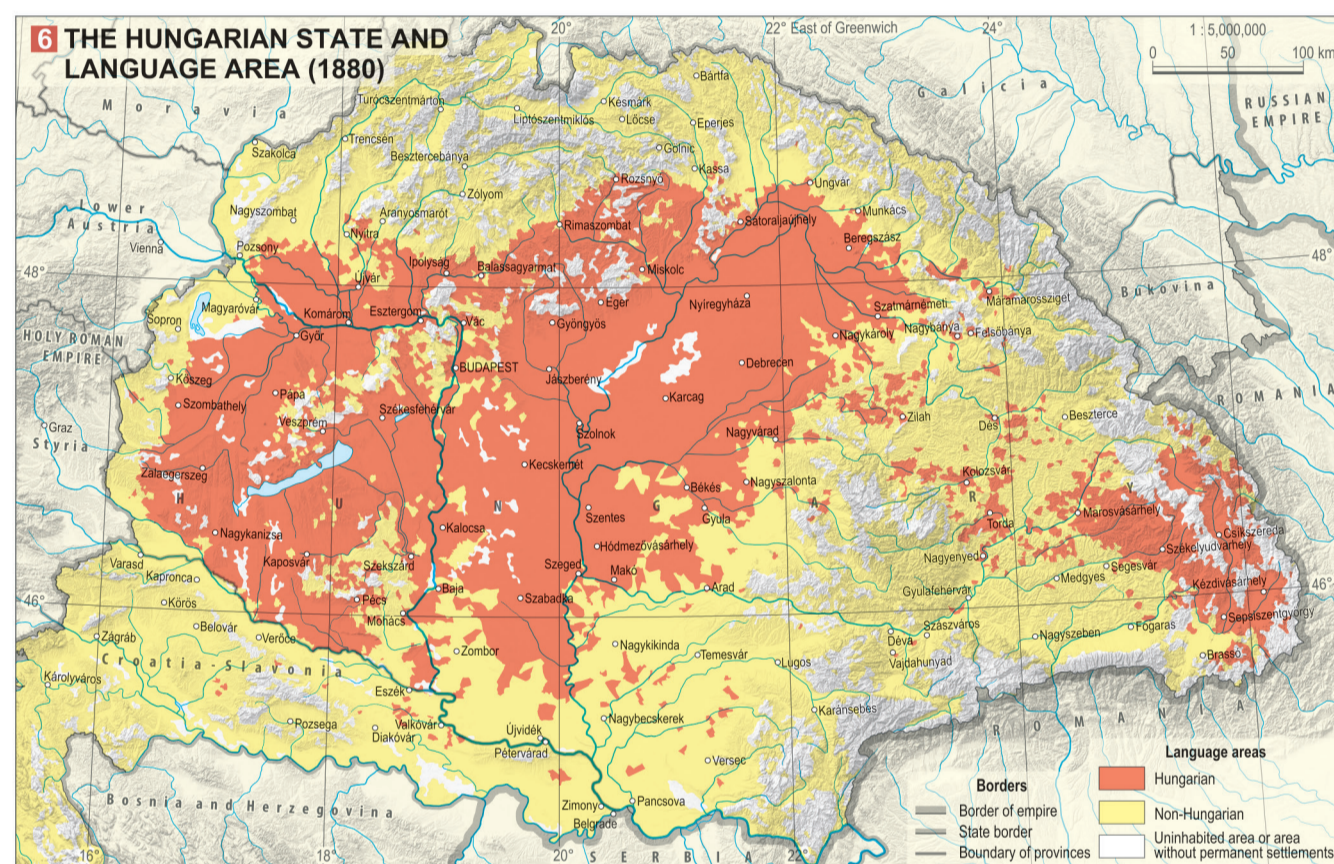
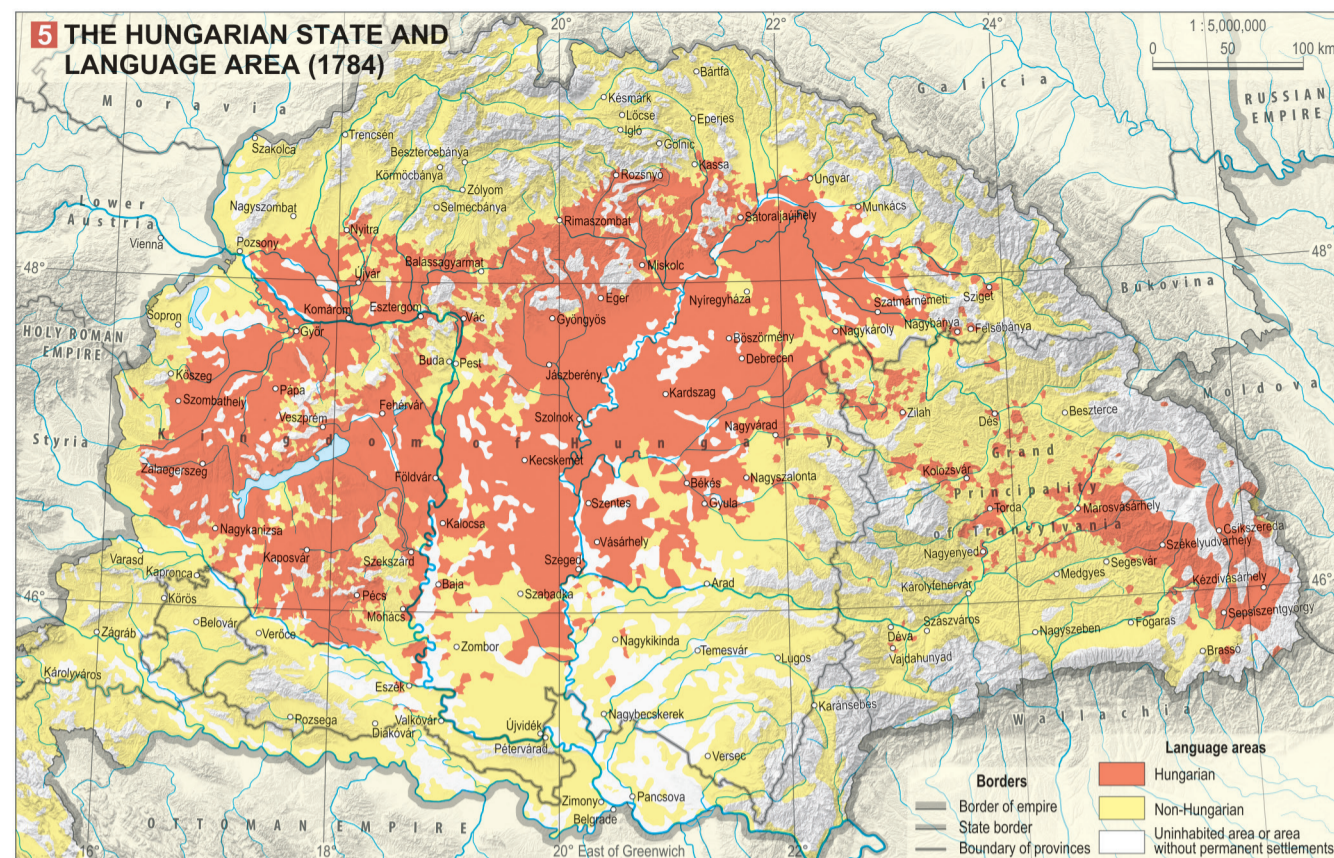
The expansion of the administrative area of Hungary in the 18th century was accompanied by relative declines in the Hungarian population share and the extent of the area dominated by Hungarian speakers. These developments reflected migration trends. Combined with the natural population increase, these factors resulted in a population increase in the Carpathian Basin from 3.7 million in 1590 to 9.2 million in 1787 [cf. England: 4.1 million in 1600 to 8.3 million in 1800]. During these two centuries, the number of Hungarians doubled (to 3.2 million), whereas the number of non-Hungarian speakers more than tripled (to 6 million). Consequently, the proportion of Hungarian speakers in the Carpathian Basin fell from 47% to around 35%, while the area dominated by Hungarian speakers shrank from 112 to 93 thousand sq. km. The latter decline was the result of the emergence of a considerable number of non-Hungarian language islands within the central Hungarian language area **5**. During this time the Hungarian-speaking area was also permanently broken into two parts (a larger area in the Pannonian Basin and a smaller one in Székely Land). This was a consequence of the destruction of a large part of the Hungarian population and the mass influx of Romanians in the Transylvanian Basin and in the major river valleys.

The Hungarian language boundary, which gradually stabilized in the rural areas, has not changed significantly since the late 18th century. After the conclusion of the period of migration during the 18th century, the 19th century saw a higher natural increase rate among the mostly Hungarian population of the central parts of the Carpathian Basin. These areas had more favourable conditions for agricultural production and therefore a larger population-supporting capacity. The natural increase rate here was higher than that observed among the non-Hungarian population living in the periphery of the country. To this was added the pull of assimilation. Reflecting these factors, between 1787 and 1880, the increase in the number and proportion of Hungarians outperformed the corresponding increase among the non-Hungarian population **2**. During this period, the Hungarian-speaking area also increased in size (by around 17,000 sq. km), doing so mostly at the expense of uninhabited areas and of the Slavic and German-speaking areas **6**.

In the mid-19th century, there were major changes not only in the Hungarian language area but also in the administrative area of Hungary in the narrower sense. Shortly before the Hungarian War of Independence (1848–49), on 29 May 1848 the Transylvanian Diet declared the reunion of Transylvania with Hungary. In this way, the total area of the country increased to 272 thousand sq. km. After the suppression of the Hungarian War of Independence, the Habsburg state administration took revenge on Hungary in the autumn of 1849, detaching Transylvania, the Croat-inhabited Medimurje (740 sq. km), the ‘Serbian Vojvodina and Banate of Temeswar’ (29,990 sq. km), and Fiume.

#### Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867–1918)

As a result of the Austro-Hungarian (1867) and Hungarian-Croatian (1868) compromises, Transylvania and Fiume were returned to Hungary, with Croatia-Slavonia becoming subject once again to the Hungar-



ian crown. All these changes meant that between 1873 and 1914, the area of the Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown increased to 325,411 sq. km, of which Croatia-Slavonia comprised an area of 42,541 sq. km.

Between 1880 and 1910 the number and proportion of Hungarian native speakers increased from 6.4 million to 10 million (i.e. from 41.2% to 48.1%). This language shift towards Hungarian was due to the following factors: the rapid urbanization of minority populations, a higher rate of natural increase among Hungarians, the domestic migration of ethnic minorities from the marginal mountainous areas with unfavourable agricultural conditions to the centrally located and more productive areas dominated by Hungarian speakers, the natural assimilation of people in the Hungarian language milieu, and a lower rate of emigration among Hungarians in relation to the rate observed among the other nationalities. A further explanatory factor was the outstanding prestige of the Hungarian nation and language during the Dual Monarchy. Following large-scale Hungarian rural-urban migration and the rapid Magyarization of the urban non-Hungarian populations, by 1910, 77.5% of the country's urban population was considered to be Hungarian and 88.9% could speak Hungarian. This trend was best illustrated by developments in the capital city of Budapest, where the proportion of those identifying as na-

tive Hungarian speakers increased from 36.8% in 1850 to 85.9% in 1910. Between 1880 and 1910 the ethnic processes favourable for Hungarians resulted in an increase in the area dominated by Hungarian speakers **2**. These ethnic processes did not affect each of the other ethnic groups equally. More than a third of the 2 million inhabitants who became Magyarized between 1850 and 1910 were Jewish, a quarter of them were Germans, and a fifth were Slovaks. The spectacular rise of the Hungarian language in the census data was not simply the result of forced Magyarization. Rather, it is a fact that Hungarian domination was actually hindered during the period of liberalism in the Dual Monarchy by laws and regulations guaranteeing the equality of citizens and minorities, as well as freedom of speech, the press and association. The country was a stronghold of liberal parliamentarism with many ethnic minority churches, institutions and foundations. All these constituted effective safeguards for the self-government of the various ethnic groups.

#### The interwar period (1918–1939)

After WW I, the Entente powers, having almost completely satisfied the most extreme territorial demands of their Czech, Romanian and Serbian allies (Treaty of Trianon, 4 June 1920), divided up the territory of Hungary, one of Europe's most ancient states, among

seven adjacent countries. As a result of this, the Hungarian state kept as little as 28.6% (i.e. 92,067 sq. km) of its former territory. Subsequent corrections to the border increased this area slightly to 93,073 sq. km by 1930. Hungary, an ancient multi-ethnic state, had thus been turned into a linguistically almost homogenous small state. Further, it was now encircled by multi-ethnic, medium-sized states: Romania, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Czechoslovakia.

Rejecting local plebiscites and the principle of self-determination, the decision-makers at Trianon transferred a third of the Hungarian-speaking area (with 3.3 million Hungarians) to the neighbouring states **8**. To justify such action, they cited strategic military-economic interests. According to the ethnic data of the neighbouring states, the number of Hungarians living in the annexed territories fell to 2.5 million in 1930.

The period between 1910 and 1930 saw the advance of the state-forming nation in every country in the Carpathian Basin. In contrast, the minorities (in particular, the Hungarians) were on the retreat in the new nation-states. Overall, the share of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin fell from 49.2% to 46.3%. In the remnant of Hungary, it increased from 88.4% to 92.1% **2**.

#### World War II (1939–1945)

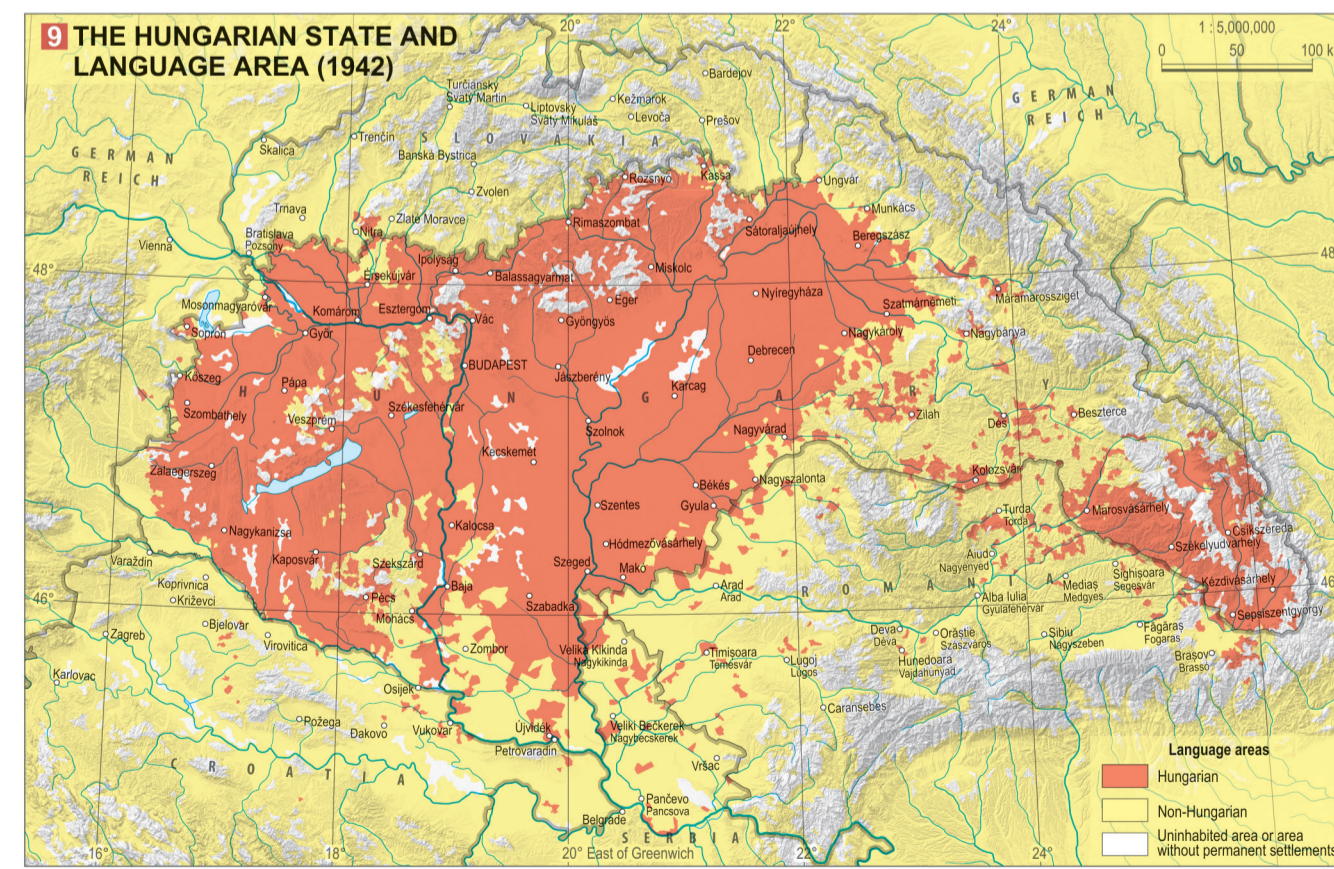
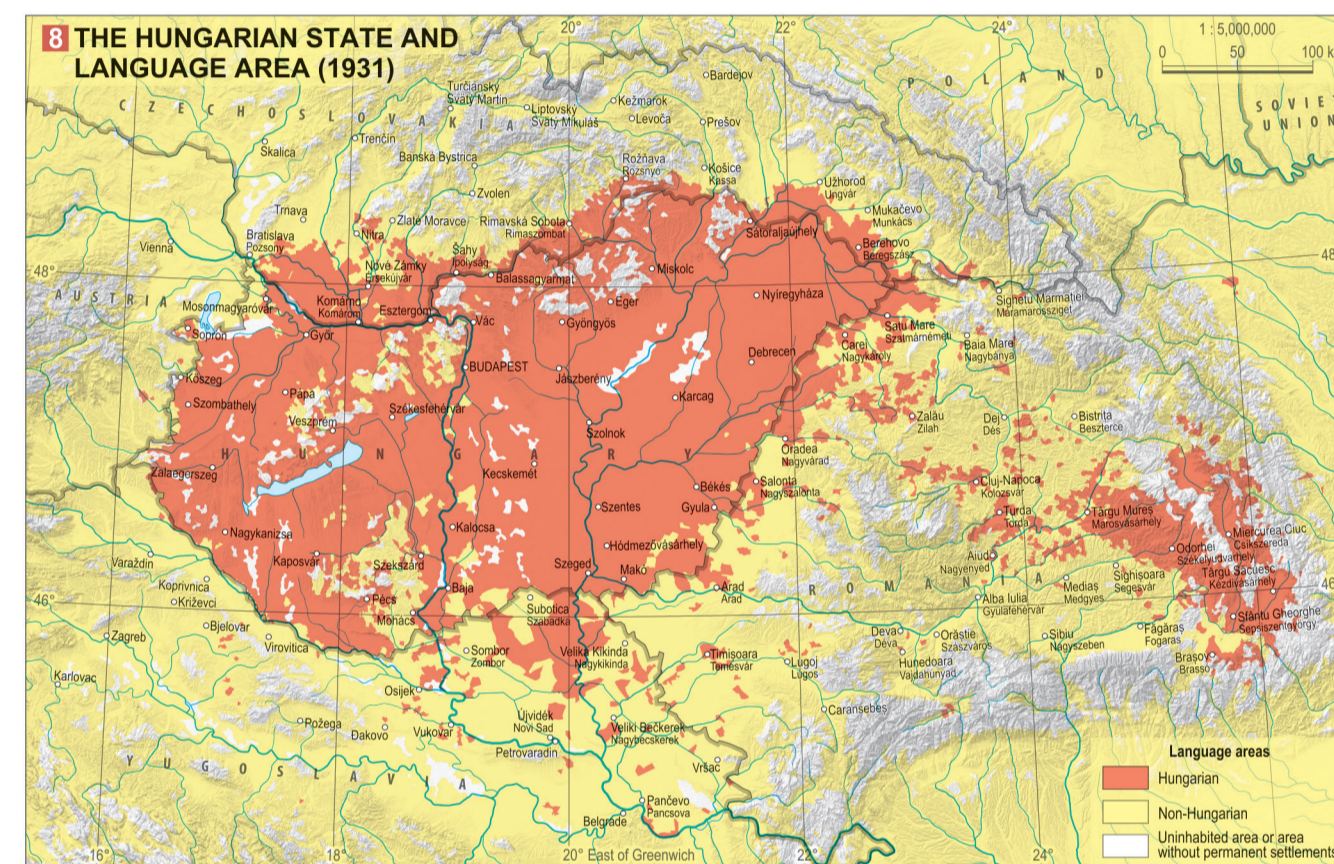
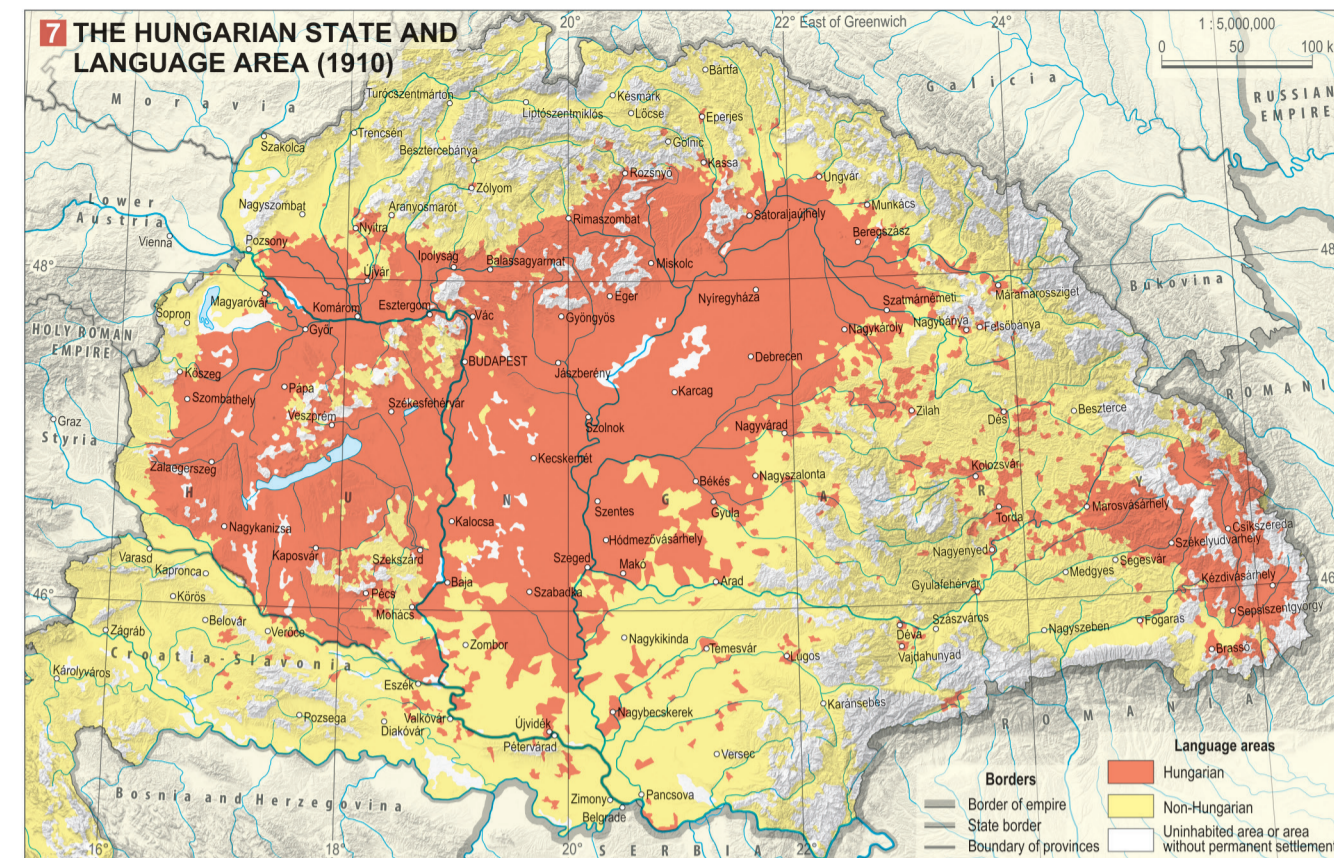
As a result of Germany's annexation of Austria, the Munich Agreement, the First Vienna Award and the outbreak of World War II, the Versailles peace system collapsed, with new national borders arising in the Carpathian Basin. Under the First Vienna Award (2 November 1938), Czechoslovakia had to return to Hungary most of the territory with an ethnic Hungarian majority that it had occupied in 1919 (12,103 sq. km, 1 million inhabitants, 84.4% of whom were Hungarian native speakers). Following Slovakia's declaration of independence (on 14 March 1939) and the ensuing dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Hungary reannexed the Rusyn-inhabited parts of Subcarpathia. Under the provisions of the Second Vienna Award (30 August 1940), approx. 42% of the 102,723.8 sq. km of territory annexed by Romania in 1919 was returned to Hungary. In 1941, during the war launched by Nazi Germany and its allies against Yugoslavia, the Independent State of Croatia was proclaimed in Zagreb on 10 April, marking the dissolution of Yugoslavia. At the end of the campaign, Hungary was able to keep the recaptured territories of Bácska and South Baranya. It also received the Croat-inhabited Medimurje as well as Prekmurje with its Slovene majority.

In all the reannexed territories, the number of Hungarians increased, owing to the arrival of public officials from the Trianon area of Hungary and the resettlement of Hungarians from Bukovina in these areas. Many bilingual people in these areas were identified in the census as Hungarian native speakers, as were most people of Jewish religion. All this helps to explain the increase in the share of Hungarian native speakers in the Carpathian Basin from 46.3% in 1930 to 49.3% in 1941.

As a result of territorial expansion between 1938 and 1941, the area of Hungary almost doubled, while its population increased to 14.7 million in 1941. Of these, 77.4% (11.4 million) self-identified as Hungarian native speakers. The new Hungary included 96% of the Hungarian-speaking area in the Carpathian Basin, and it united 95% of Hungarian native speakers **9**.

#### The post-war and communist periods (1945–1989)

Concluded in the aftermath of WWII, the Paris Peace Treaty (10 February 1947) restored Hungary's January 1938 borders. The only discrepancy was the supplement-



ary annexation of three Hungarian villages near Bratislava to Czechoslovakia. In the countries of the region, the German populations (and in Czechoslovakia, the Hungarians as well) were collectively condemned as war criminals. Their complete or partial removal be-

gan immediately, with the strategically important border regions being prioritized. In each country, this 'advantageous' historical juncture was exploited by the authorities to transform the ethnic composition of the border zone by resettling people from the state-



forming nation (Czechs, Slovaks) as replacements for the expelled Germans and Hungarians. Such action served nationalistic social objectives and rendered future Hungarian demands for territorial revision impossible. In the second half of the 20th century, the nation-states of the Carpathian Basin managed to homogenize their populations ethnically more and more. Despite all this, a total Hungarian minority population of nearly 2.5 million people remained in the neighbouring countries of Hungary even after 1945.

In the ensuing decades, the Soviet-type reorganization of society and the economy in the region's communist countries greatly increased the spatial mobility of the population, with hundreds of thousands of peasants being effectively forced to migrate to the urban centres. The effect of this development was to increase still further the proportion of people from the state-forming nation in urban areas. The unspoken aim was to suppress the Hungarian presence in such areas, even in many towns where they formed the majority.

In general, it can be said that during communism, the number of Hungarians both within Hungary and outside its borders increased steadily until the early 1980s (rising to 10.6 million and 2.8 million, respectively). Thanks to assimilation, however, in urban areas and in the language islands there was a significant Hungarian spatial expansion in Hungary, coupled conversely with a significant decline abroad [10][11].

### The decades since 1990

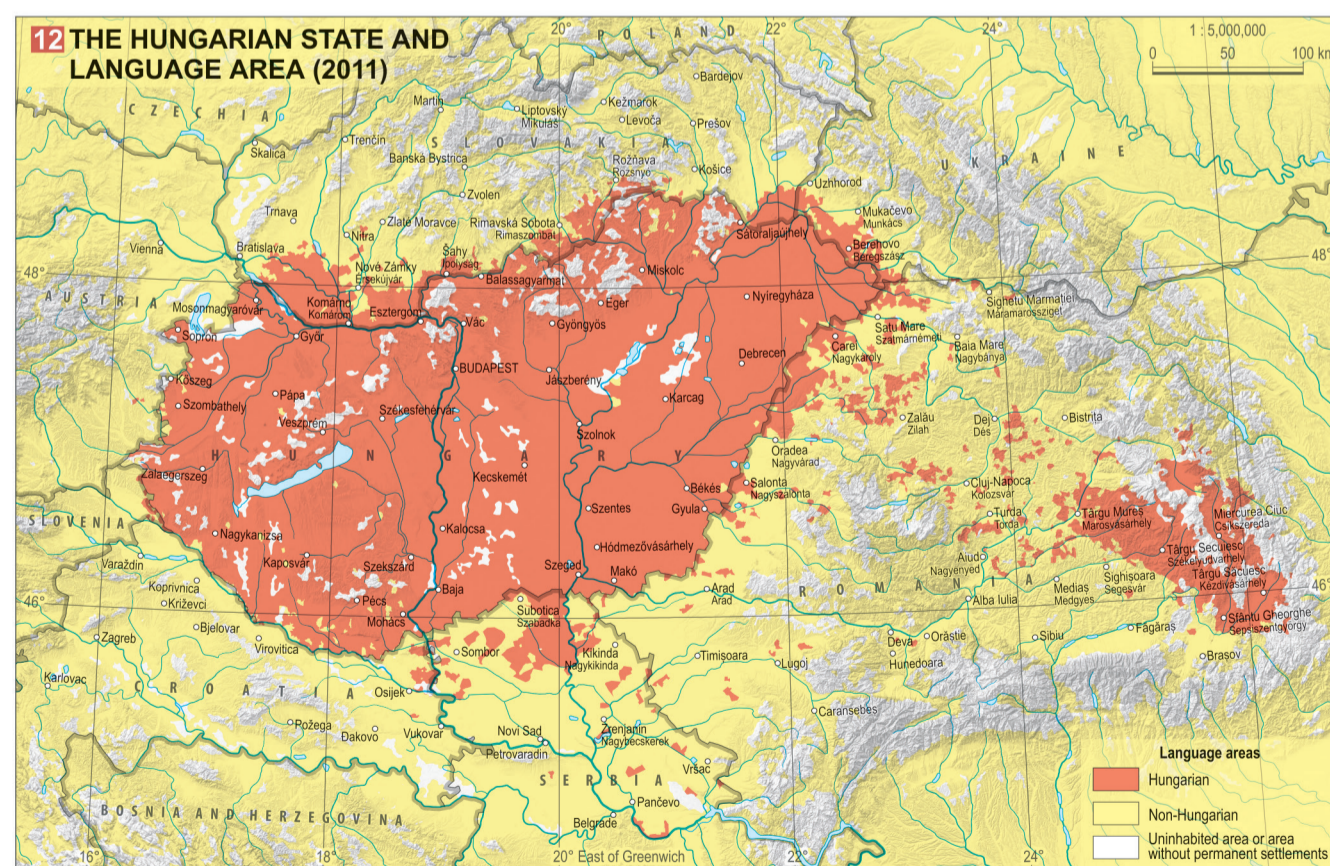
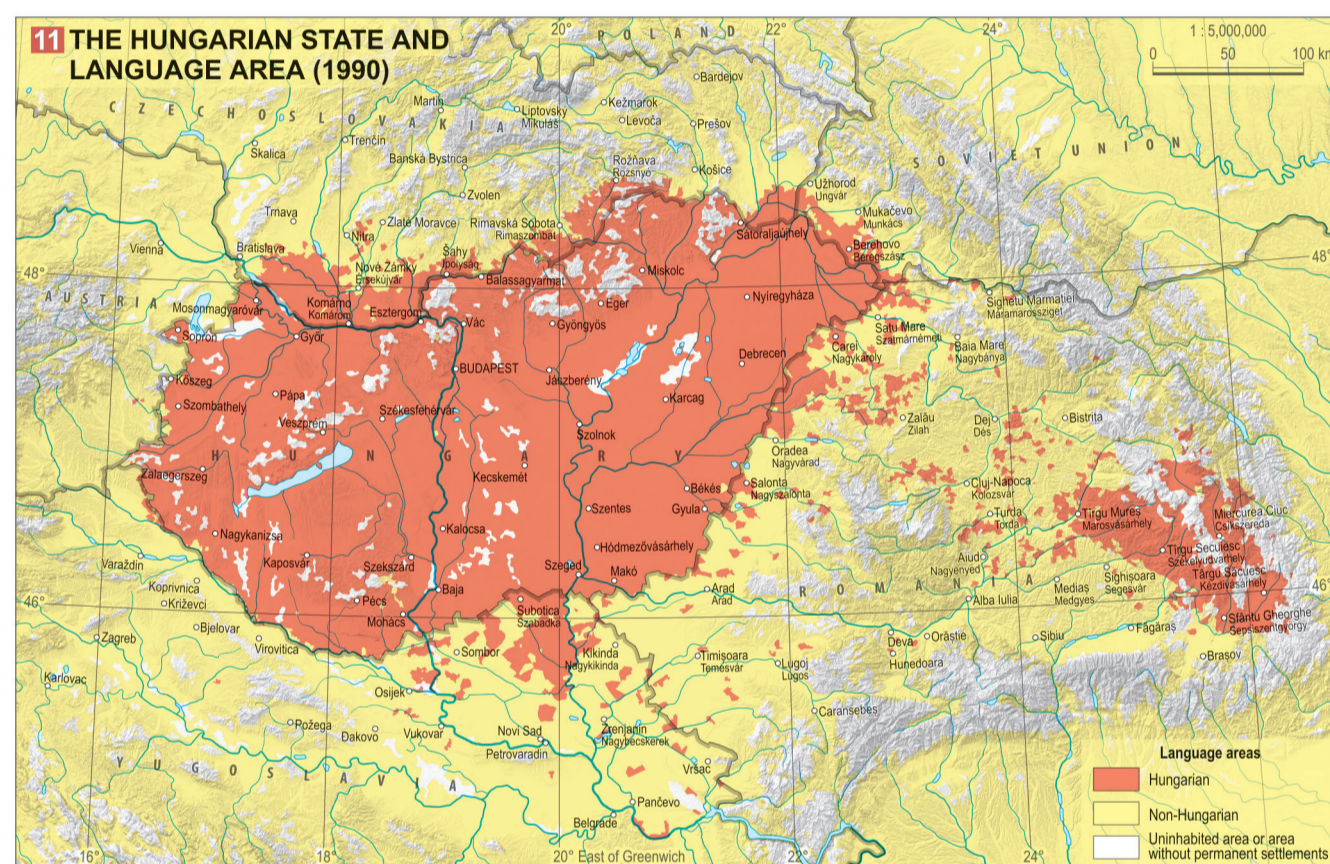
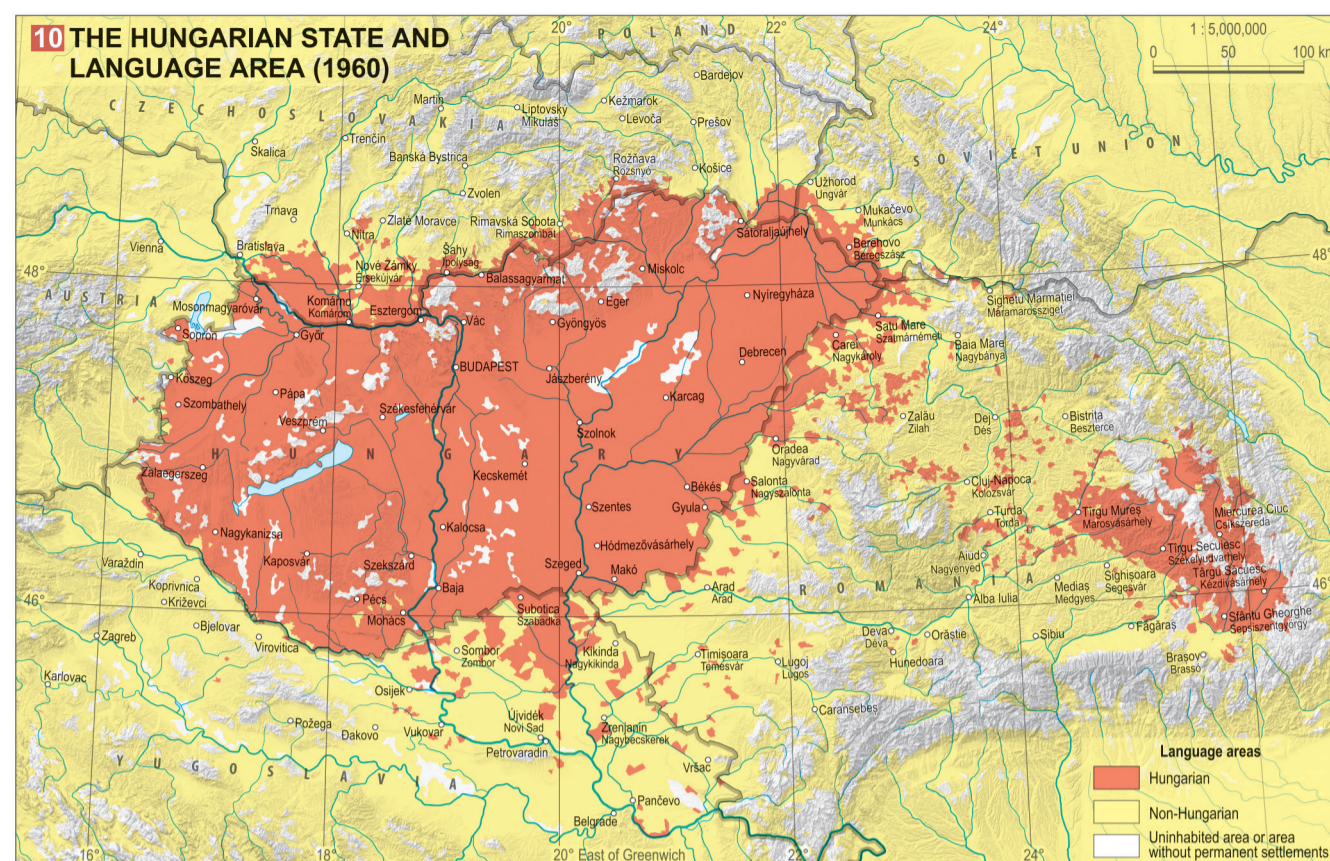
The decade after 1990 saw a continuation of earlier trends, resulting in a further decline in the Hungarian population. The 2001–2002 censuses revealed the presence of just 11.8 million ethnic Hungarians and 12 million native Hungarian speakers in the Carpathian Basin. The total population of this region fell from 30.2 million in 1990/91 to 28.5 million in 2011. Meanwhile, the Hungarian share of the total population declined from 42.5% in 1990 to 36.4% in 2011. The explanation for this decline was the growing share of respondents who refrained from answering census questions about ethnicity and native language, as well as an increase in the proportion of people self-identifying as Roma. Between 2001 and 2011, the Hungarian population decline accelerated further. Alongside the increasingly unfavourable demographic indicators (a growing natural decrease and increased emigration), this development was caused by assimilation and by a sharp increase in the number of people without ethnic affiliation [12].

The factors at play in these above trends are both objective (natural decrease and migration) and subjective (factors affecting people's sense of ethnic identity, assimilation). In recent times, in addition to the already significant Hungarian emigration from Zakarpattia, Transylvania and Vojvodina, there has been an increase in migration 'to the west' from Hungary itself. Furthermore, whereas in earlier periods many Hungarians emigrating from the adjacent countries chose Hungary as their destination, more recently emigration and working abroad temporarily have usually entailed moving to areas outside the Carpathian Basin.

## Hungarians around the globe

### The pre-1849 period

Although during past centuries individual and small groups of Hungarians appeared in almost every continent, until the mid-19th century there was no mass emigration of Hungarians from Hungary. A notable exception, however, was the migration of Hungarians to Vienna, capital of the Habsburg Empire. This development began when the city became the de facto capital of the Kingdom of Hungary following the Ottoman occupation of Buda in the mid-16th century. From then onwards and until the early 20th century, the city attracted many Hungarians. As a result, the number of



Hungarians in Vienna increased from 15 thousand to 45 thousand between 1840 and 1910. Other areas where sizeable numbers of Hungarians resided outside the Kingdom of Hungary before the mid-19th century include the northern edge of Wallachia in the early medieval period and Moldova, which lies to the east of the Carpathians. In this latter region, the Roman Catholic Csángós constitute an extant Hungarian population even today. Living amid Romanian speakers and the Orthodox religious milieu, the Csángós appear to have emerged in the wake of a Hungarian exodus from Northern Transylvania and Székely Land that began in the 14th century. They numbered 10–20 thousand in the 15th to 18th centuries, then increasing in number to around 50 thousand in the mid-19th century. The Székelys of Bukovina were a special group of Hungarians also living east of the Carpathians. They numbered around 10 thousand in the late 19th century. The community arose when a group of Székelys fled to Moldova in 1764, whence they moved between 1776 and 1786 to Bukovina, which lay under Austrian rule. Between 1883 and 1910 and again in the period 1941–1944, they were resettled in Hungary.

Emigration and the Hungarian world diaspora between 1849 and 2022

The first wave of Hungarian emigration to Europe's more distant countries or even to North America took place after the defeat of the 1848–49 War of Independence. At that time, most of the Hungarian political and military elite fled the country accompanied by their followers. In 1859, Lajos Kossuth, György Klapka and László Teleki established the *Hungarian National Directorate* as a body coordinating the affairs of the Hungarian diaspora.

### Emigration and the Hungarian world diaspora between 1849 and 2022

The economic development of the USA rapidly accelerated after the Civil War (1861–1865), attracting 22 million immigrants between 1880 and 1914. Between 1899 and 1913, 1.2 million inhabitants (33.1% of whom were native Hungarian speakers) left Hungary for new homes in the USA (86.2%), Romania (8.5%) or Germany (3.1%). The wave of Hungarian emigration that preceded WWI and which peaked in 1907, is commonly referred to in Hungary as the 'peasant emigration', since 68.4% of the emigrants were employed in agriculture. The 412 thousand native Hungarian speakers who emigrated to the USA between 1898 and 1913 settled mainly in Pennsylvania (123,000), New York (77,000), Ohio (70,000) and New Jersey (62,000). During this period, more than a fifth (290,000) of those who emigrated from Hungary subsequently returned home. Among such returnees, 32.9% were Hungarian native speakers. In the period 1899–1913, the Kingdom of Hungary permanently lost 905 thousand inhabitants (including around 300,000 Hungarian native speakers).

Amid the political and economic chaos of the post-war period and during the country's foreign occupation and the rise and fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919), thousands of right-wing ('white') and then left-wing ('red') Hungarians left for Austria, mainly settling in Vienna. A significant portion of the latter group were people of Jewish faith. In this way, the number of Hungarians in the old imperial city increased from 45,000 in 1910 to 76,000 in 1920.

The main source of interwar Hungarian emigration was the area annexed from Hungary in 1920, which by this time formed parts of Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The Hungarians living there migrated not only to Hungary but also to territories overseas. In view of the USA's new restrictive immigration policy, Canada and Latin America became the main recipient regions. The *Association of Hungarians Abroad* was established in 1920 with the aim of maintaining contact with the growing émigré community. The year 1938 saw the foundation of the *World Federation of Hungarians*.

Around 1930, the world population of Hungarians was estimated at 12.2 million, 858 thousand of whom lived outside the Carpathian Basin. The majority of this latter group resided in the Americas (e.g. USA: 538,000; Canada: 50,000; Brazil: 50,000). Europe was also home to a significant Hungarian diaspora (e.g. the Moldovan and Wallachian parts of Romania: 73,000; France: 40,000; Germany: 20,000) [13]. Among the estimated 538,000 Hungarians living in the USA in 1930, the largest group (91.5%) lived in the northeastern states. The Hungarians had founded 1,046 associations, the oldest and largest ones being the following: the Verhovay Aid Association (1886), the Rákóczi Aid Society (1888), the American Hungarian Aid Society (1892), and the American Hungarian Reformed Society (1896).

From the mid-1930s onwards, in the wake of growing antisemitism in Europe and the Nazi takeover of power in Germany, the emigration of Hungarian Jews to the USA increased, becoming even more significant in the aftermath of WWII. In 1944–1945, many Hungarians (including those of Jewish faith) were forced to leave their homelands in various parts of the Carpathian Basin as deportees and war refugees. Many of these people returned home in 1945, but with the Sovietization of the region and the establishment of the communist dictatorships, the numbers leaving the various countries increased, peaking between 1947 and 1949. If we include Jewish people leaving for Palestine and overseas, the number of Hungarians who left the Carpathian Basin for the 'West' between 1945 and 1949 can be estimated at 150–250 thousand. A peculiar type of Hungarian diaspora comprised the *Hungarian prisoners of war and civilians* (600,000–900,000 people) who were taken to forced labour camps (*Gulags*) in the USSR after 1944, remaining there for up to 10 years or more. A further 200,000 Hungarian prisoners were executed or died due to inhuman conditions.

After the communist takeover in 1949, emigration from Hungary became far more difficult. Anyone who left the country without a permit was branded a 'disident', a word with pejorative connotations in the communist countries.

### 13 HUNGARIANS AROUND THE GLOBE (1930, 2022)

Country, region	Number of Hungarians (thousand people)*	
	1930	2022
Germany	20	300
United Kingdom	2	200
Austria (excluding Burgenland)	8	130
Sweden		40
Switzerland	1	35
Netherlands	3	27
Italy	5	22
France	40	20
Spain		20
Ireland		15
Belgium	5	13
Denmark		13
Czechia	12	11
Norway		10
Romania (excluding Transylvania)	73	6
Other countries of Europe	29	30
Israel		200
Other countries of Asia	1	2
Africa	3	10
USA	538	1,323
Canada	50	320
Brazil	50	10
Argentina	10	30
Other countries of America	8	14
Australia and New Zealand		83
<b>Hungarian diaspora total</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>2,883</b>
Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin total	10,526	11,447
<b>Hungarians in the world total</b>	<b>11,384</b>	<b>14,330</b>

\*On a scale ranging from those with Hungarian ethnic identity to those of partial Hungarian descent

After the communist takeover in 1949, emigration from Hungary became far more difficult. Anyone who left the country without a permit was branded a 'disident', a word with pejorative connotations in the communist countries.

A significant wave of emigration, which added to the Hungarian diaspora around the world, occurred in the months following the Soviet suppression of the *Hungarian Revolution of 1956*. At that time, 205 thousand Hungarians fled abroad, ultimately settling in the following recipient countries: USA (40,000), Canada (26,500), United Kingdom (21,000), Austria (19,000), Germany (15,500), France (12,700), Switzerland (12,000), Australia (11,000), Belgium (10,000), the Netherlands (10,000), and Sweden (10,000).

In the period 1958–1989, 131,000 people (45.6% with permits issued by the Hungarian authorities) left Hungary. Of those who left legally in the period (28,700), 13.3% went to West Germany, 8.9% to Canada, 7.9% to the USA, and 6.7% to Austria.

Around 1990, the Hungarian world population was estimated at 15.5 million, of which 2.45 million lived outside the Carpathian Basin. The substantial increase in the population of the diaspora between 1930 and 1990 (from 0.9 million to 2.45 million) was not only the result of mass emigration; it also reflected the fact that in North American censuses the number of people claiming to be of Hungarian ethnic origin nearly tripled during these 60 years (increasing from 0.63 million to 1.85 million).

From 1990 to 2022, the number of Hungarians and people of Hungarian ancestry in the world (based on the available but rather incomparable census and estimated data) appears to have decreased to 14.2 million, owing to higher natural decrease rates in the Carpathian Basin and emigration. This population decline could not be offset by the population growth of the diaspora. According to UN data, in 1990, 392,000 people who had been born in Hungary were living in other countries; this number then increased to 714,000 in 2020. If, based on the census data, the number of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin is estimated at 120% of the population in Hungary, then the number of Hungarians who had been born in the Carpathian Basin at the two dates was 470,000 and 857,000, respectively. This means that between 1990 and 2020, the population of the *Hungarian diaspora around the world* increased from 2.45 million to 2.89 million, with the proportion of those born in the Carpathian Basin increasing from 19.2% to 30%. All of this reflects the increased rate of emigration (mainly to Western Europe) from the Carpathian Basin. As a result, between 1990 and 2022, the number of Hungarians living in Europe but outside the Carpathian Basin increased 2.3 times (from 382,000 to 891,000), while the Hungarian population in Australia nearly doubled (from 41,000 to 81,000). In contrast, in North and Latin America, owing mainly to assimilation and the arrival of fewer Hungarian immigrants, there was a substantial decline in the size of the Hungarian diaspora.

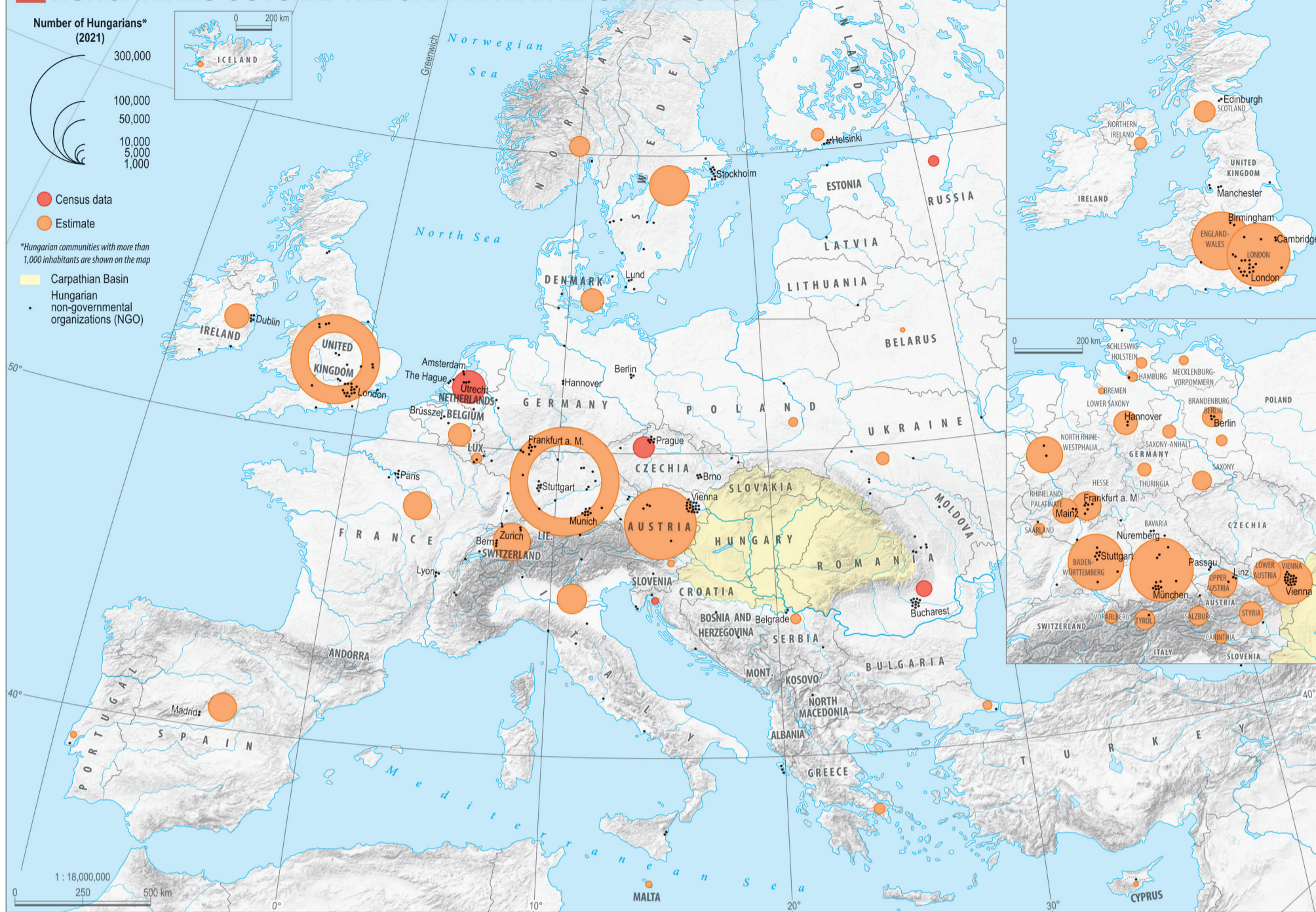
### The Hungarian diaspora today

The estimated population of the Hungarian diaspora in 2022 is 2.9 million, a figure based on data on ethnicity stemming from the most recent censuses in North America and various European countries. In estimating the size of the Hungarian diaspora in other states, we based the figure on the number of people born in Hungary, the multiplier of 1.2 for the total number of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, as well as data from local Hungarian organizations.

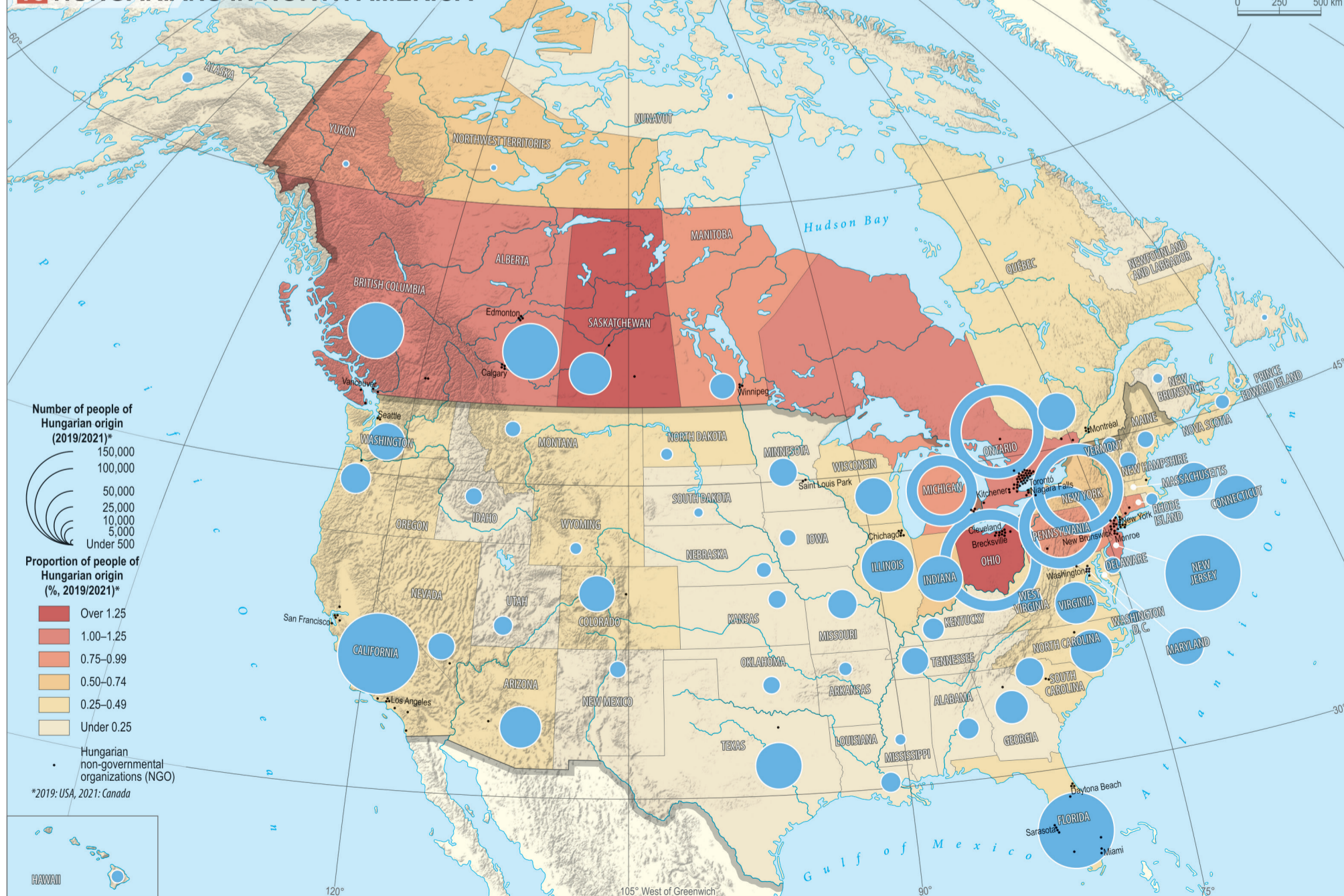
Based on all this, our estimate for the population



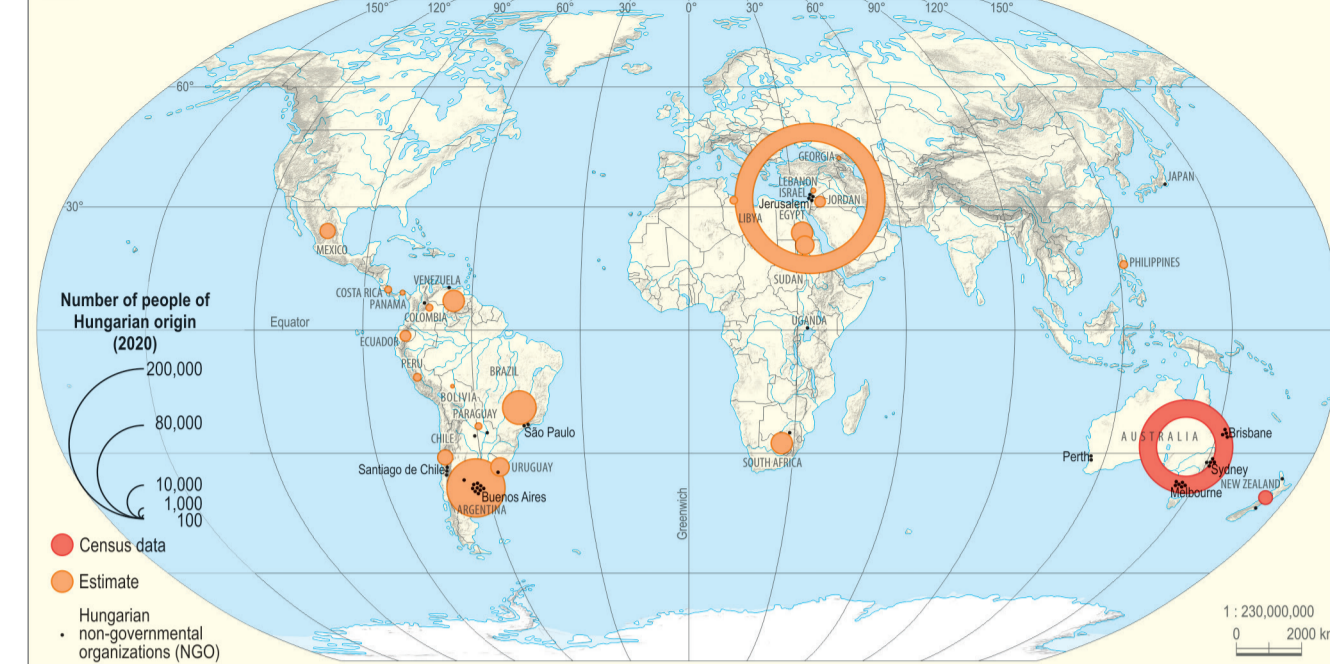
#### 14 HUNGARIANS OUTSIDE THE CARPATHIAN BASIN IN EUROPE



#### 15 HUNGARIANS IN NORTH AMERICA



#### 16 HUNGARIANS IN THE WORLD (OUTSIDE EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA)



of the Hungarian diaspora in Europe is nearly 900,000 people, a third of whom (approx. 300,000) live in Germany, 3/4 of whom reside in southern Germany 14. As many as 80% of the 45 Hungarian non-governmental organizations (NGO) in Germany were established in that part of the country, operating mainly in and around Munich, Stuttgart and Frankfurt am Main. The second most populous Hungarian community in Europe outside the Carpathian Basin is the one in the United Kingdom (200,000 people). Despite a fall in the number of Hungarian immigrants to the UK since the latter half of the 2010s, the number of UK residents born in Hungary increased almost sevenfold between 1990 and 2020, decreasing slightly after 'Brexit'. Half of the Hungarians residing in the UK (i.e. 100,000 people) found a new home in or around London. One in three of the 33 Hungarian NGOs in the country are based in the same area. Excluding the Hungarian population of Burgenland, Austria currently has a Hungarian population of around 130 thousand, which is 5.5 times the estimated figure for 1990. Austria's largest Hungarian community (50,000 people) is to be found in Vienna, where three quarters of the 25 Hungarian NGOs in Austria are based. The Hungarian diaspora also includes significant populations (20–50,000) in Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the countries of southwestern Europe.

In 2021, 11,000 inhabitants in Czechia and 6,200 inhabitants in the part of Romania beyond the Carpathians self-identified as ethnic Hungarians. The actual number of Hungarians in Czechia may be as high as 30,000. A fifth of them live in and around Prague, where 5 of the 12 Hungarian NGOs in Czechia operate. The most significant community of Hungarians in the Walachian and Moldovan part of Romania (2,600 according to census data, 10,000 according to estimates) lives in and around Bucharest, where 11 Hungarian NGOs are currently in operation. Following more than two centuries of Romanization (coupled with anti-Hungarian incitement), which occurred primarily within the ecclesiastical framework, Moldova's Roman Catholic Csángó population of Hungarian origin has now almost completely lost both its Hungarian identity and its knowledge of the Hungarian language. Among Catholics in Moldova, the registered ethnic Hungarian share declined from two-thirds in 1900 to 22% in 1930 and then to 1.2% (2100 people) in 2021. Among the Csángós, who self-identify principally as Romanians and as Romanian (rather than Roman) Catholics, the proportion of those who also speak the Csángó dialect of Hungarian would seem to have decreased from a quarter to perhaps a sixth during the past three decades.

In consequence of several waves of emigration over the past century and a half, most Hungarians residing outside the Carpathian Basin still live in North America 15. Yet, between 1990 and 2022, the number of people who self-identified as of Hungarian ethnic origin decreased from 1.8 million to 1.6 million. This decline reflects increased assimilation, lower immigration, and – to a much lesser degree – the return of the elderly to their former homeland. As many as 80% of Hungarians residing in North America (1.3 million people) are citizens of the United States of America, with nearly two-thirds traditionally living in the north-eastern part of the country and the Great Lakes region. People of Hungarian origin are also overrepresented along the New York–Pittsburgh–Cleveland–Detroit–Chicago axis. The second largest concentration of Hungarians in the USA, 147 thousand people, arose on the West Coast mainly in California (110,000 Hungarians). Most of this group live in the urban agglomerations

of Los Angeles and San Francisco. The Florida community of nearly 100,000 Hungarians, mostly pensioners, came into being in recent decades in consequence of migration within the USA. Almost half of the Hungarian organizations registered in the USA are church or community-run, but cultural, scouting, lobbying and educational organizations also constitute a significant share (6–10%). As many as 70% of Hungarian NGOs are based in the northeastern states (mainly in the New York, Washington, Cleveland and Chicago areas), but organizations based in California are also numerous. The largest umbrella organization representing Hungarian civil society in the USA is the Hungarian American Coalition (1991), but other major national organizations include the American Hungarian Federation (1906), the American Hungarian Educators Association (1974), the Hungarian Scout Association in Exeteris (1989), the Association of Hungarian American Academics (2015), and the American Hungarian Schools Association (2017).

The number of people of Hungarian descent in Canada increased from 130 thousand to 348 thousand between 1980 and 2016, owing to increased immigration. This number then declined to 320 thousand in 2021 after a slowdown in immigration and increased natural assimilation. As many as 54% of Hungarians in Canada live in the eastern provinces, mainly in Ontario (149,000). Most of these people reside in the Toronto agglomeration. A similar number of Hungarians (142,000) are scattered among the western provinces (in British Columbia and in the Prairie provinces), with most of these people residing in the metropolitan agglomerations (e.g. Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg). The most important umbrella bodies representing Hungarian NGOs in Canada (70% of which are based in Ontario and Quebec – mostly in Toronto and Montreal) are the Canadian Hungarian Heritage Council (2001) and the National Alliance of Hungarians in Canada (2012).

In Latin America, the number of Hungarians has declined by a half over the past 50 years, owing to natural assimilation, falling immigration rates, and even reverse migration to Hungary. In 2020, the number of Hungarians in the region was estimated by the local Hungarian organizations at 54,000. Around 10% of this number had been born in Hungary. The most populous Hungarian communities are found in Argentina (20–40,000, mainly in and around Buenos Aires) and in Brazil (8–14,000, mostly in São Paulo and its environs) 16. Venezuela was home to an estimated 4,000 Hungarians, but several hundred of them moved to

Hungary in 2018–19. In 2004, various Hungarian organizations in the region created the Association of Hungarian National Organizations in Latin America with the aim of promoting their interests more effectively. Major Hungarian organizations include the Federation of Hungarian Institutions in Argentina (1993), the Hungarian Charitable Society of Brazil (1926) and the Brazilian–Hungarian Cultural Association (1950). The oldest community of Hungarian origin in Africa is that of the Magyarab people, an Arabic-speaking Muslim group (as many as 60 thousand persons). They are the descendants of Hungarians brought to Africa in the 16th century at the time of the Ottoman Empire. The Magyarab people, who still nurture a Hungarian identity, live in the border zone between Egypt and Sudan, along the Nile (e.g. in the vicinity of Aswan). A considerable number of people of Hungarian ancestry (around 4,000) still live in South Africa. The main representative of the diaspora here, is the Hungarian Alliance of South Africa (1957).

In Asia, the largest group of Hungarian speakers and people of Hungarian descent are Jewish people from the Carpathian Basin, who found a new home in Israel. The community is the result of Jewish immigration to Israel, which began in the second half of the 19th century but peaked after World War II. By the early 1960s, the population of the Hungarian-speaking community in Israel was estimated at between 125,000 and 200,000. Based on 2020 data, in Israel 12,133 had been born in Hungary. However, the number of those with at least one forebear who was a Hungarian native speaker is far larger than this (up to 200,000).

The Hungarians of Australia settled at the greatest distance from their original homeland. In 2021, they numbered 81 thousand, based on the census data for ethnic origin. The Hungarian population in Australia has doubled during the past three decades, but the number of people born in Hungary has decreased from 29,000 to 18,000 over the same period. The primary reason for this is the death of older people who came in the major waves of emigration. Another factor is (was) the increasing share of Hungarian immigrants from Transylvania (Romania) and Vojvodina (Serbia). A third of Australians with Hungarian ancestry live in New South Wales (mainly in Sydney), 31% reside in the state of Victoria (mostly in Melbourne), and 18% in Queensland (around Brisbane). In New Zealand, at the time of the 2018 census, 1,638 residents indicated a Hungarian ethnic identity. Founded in 1954, the Federal Council of Hungarian Associations in Australia and New Zealand represents the Hungarian organizations of the two countries.



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