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European Parliamentary Elections in the Carpathian Basin in 2014

Hungary is one of those countries which, as a result of the 20th century border changes, have lost a significant proportion of their territory and population, and consequently, substantial Hungarian communities have lived in the neighbouring countries (in Romania: more than 1.2 million, in Slovakia: 450 000, in Serbia: 250 000, in the Ukraine: 150 000) for more than 90 years now. Hungary, as the mother country of this ethnic Hungarian population of approximately 2.1 million people, was offered a new opportunity of minority protection by joining the European Union in 2004. However, the ten years gone by since the EU accession of the Central European countries have made it clear that the EU membership itself does not guarantee the protection of minorities. Nonetheless, the publicity provided by the European Parliament (EP) enhances the efficient representation of the interests and concerns of ethnic Hungarian communities. Thus regarding the Hungarian government's kin-state policy, the most important concern of the EP elections, held in each member country of the European Union between 22-25 May 2014, was the number of ethnic Hungarian representatives gaining EP mandates for the next five-year period, and consequently, to what extent ethnic Hungarian interests would be represented in the parliamentary body of the EU.

In 2004, out of the four major ethnic Hungarian communities living outside the borders of Hungary, only Hungarians in Slovakia had the opportunity to send representatives into the European Parliament, but later, with the accession of Romania in 2007, Transylvanian Hungarians were also given the chance to be represented at the mid-term EP elections. In Slovakia, the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK-MKP) won 92 927 votes with a participation rate of 16.96%, which meant 13.24% of the votes, earning two out of the fourteen mandates of Slovakia. In Romania, around 18 million voters were entitled to cast their votes in 2007, and their participation turned out to be a few decimals lower than 30% (29.46%). The threshold required for obtaining a mandate was 5% for parties, while László Tőkés¹, running as an independent candidate, needed to reach

¹ László Tőkés has been an iconic leader for Transylvanian Hungarians. He played a significant role in the 1989 revolution in Timisoara, and as a protestant pastor his activities have contributed to the strengthening of the Hungarian community in Romania.

2.85% in order to assure his seat in the EP. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR-RMDSZ), the most popular ethnic Hungarian party in Romania, received 282 929 votes (5.52%), while László Tőkés got 176 533 votes (3.44%). By breaking down the results by counties, the analysis revealed that Tőkés and the DAHR fought a fierce battle in the Seklerland (Székelyföld – consisting of Harghita and Covasna, and parts of Mures counties) inhabited mostly by Hungarians. In Covasna county, it was the independent candidate that prevailed by far, with about 12 000 more votes than the DAHR. In Harghita county, the competition was much more balanced, for there the DAHR received 43.8% of the votes while Tőkés won 43.1%. In Mureş county, the DAHR won with a self-confident 33.4% of the votes, while only 12.1% of the voters opted for Tőkés.

In the 2004-2009 period, Slovakian Hungarians were represented by two SMK-MKP politicians, Edit Bauer and Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, whereas the Transylvanian community was represented by László Tőkés as well as DAHR politicians Gyula Winker and Csaba Sógor. Besides that, there was one more Transylvanian Hungarian member of the political body: Magor Csibi from Miercurea Ciuc (Csíkszereda) obtained a mandate on the list of the National Liberal Party. Since then, he has retired from political activism, and currently he is the president of WWF Romania.

In the 2009-2014 period, ethnic Hungarians had once again five representatives in the EP. In 2009, the SMK-MKP in Slovakia was able to repeat its 2004 result, and obtained two out of the thirteen mandates. With a national participation rate of 19.64% the Hungarian party got 93 750 votes. With an 11.33% support, Edit Bauer and Alajos Mészáros got into the Parliament on behalf of the SMK-MKP. In Transylvania, the Hungarian Co-operation List was put together as a result of a compromise between the DAHR and the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT),² which obtained 8.92% of the votes at the elections. However, legally speaking, this list was that of the DAHR; launching a joint list was out of the question because the EMNT is not a political party but an association. EMNT-head László Tőkés got into the EP as the leader of the Hungarian Co-operation List, and Gyula Winkler and Csaba Sógor, candidates of DAHR, could keep their mandates as well.

² The Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (Erdélyi Magyar Nemzeti Tanács), led by László Tőkés, emerged as a civil organization promoting the issue of autonomy for Transylvanian Hungarians. The Council is very critical of the DAHR, the ethnic Hungarian party. In 2010, the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania was established as a political party on the basis of the Council, however, the Council did not suspend its activity as a civil organization.

In the course of the past ten years, ethnic Hungarian representatives worked in close co-operation with the MEPs of the Fidesz-KDNP, the centre-right conservative party coalition of Hungary, since they were sitting shoulder to shoulder in the rows of the same European party family, the European People's Party (EPP) in the EP. This co-operation is likely to be further reinforced in the next five-year period, because for the 2014-2019 period it became possible for the Hungarian communities of the currently non-EU members Subcarpathia³ (Ukraine) and Vojvodina (Serbia), the two other principal "transborder" Hungarian regions besides Southern Slovakia and Transylvania, to be represented in the European Parliament. The Fidesz-KDNP party coalition announced in April 2014 that it would set up a "national" list for the European parliamentary elections on which Hungarian communities living outside Hungary could take "winning" positions. Based on the results of the Hungarian national parliamentary elections of April 2014, the governing parties had a good chance of getting 10-12 places out of the 21 EP mandates assigned to Hungary. Transylvania was represented by László Tókécs, placed third on the list. The seventh place of the list was occupied by György Schöpflin, who had lived in the United Kingdom from 1950 till 2004 and who has been an active MEP of Fidesz since 2004, representing Hungarians living in the Western parts of the world. György Schöpflin's activities in the EP are connected to the domain of minority protection, since he has outstanding academic achievements in political theory, nationalism, national identity and the social network of ethnic minorities. The ninth place on the Fidesz' EP list was occupied by Andrea Bocskor, professor of Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute and the director of the Tivadar Lehoczky Institute (a local research institute for social sciences in Subcarpathia), while the tenth place was given to Andor Deli, the vice-president of the government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and Secretary for education, public administration and national communities of the province. The symbolic twenty-first place of the Fidesz-KDNP list was assigned to László Gubík, president of the Via Nova Youth Group, the youth organization of the SMK-MKP in Slovakia. As László Gubík, who was the first to openly announce his acquisition of Hungarian citizenship in Slovakia, and

³ Subcarpathia is the Hungarian name of the westernmost region of Ukraine, where the Hungarian population of Ukraine lives. The region is more often referred to as Transcarpathia, as it expresses the „majority point of view”, that is, that of Kiev. However, since the paper applies a Hungarian perspective for its analysis, the authors prefer to use the term Subcarpathia, because it is more widespread in the Hungarian language.

who was, as a consequence, deprived of his Slovakian citizenship, said himself, “a symbolic Hungarian from Slovakia was nominated for a symbolic position”.⁴ The Fidesz-KDNP list received about 1.2 million votes with a participation rate of 28.97%, thus the 51.48% support brought 12 mandates for the party.

The EP elections of May 2014 implied several questions for the future of the European parliamentary representation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. In 2009, with the secession of some representatives of the SMK-MKP and the foundation of the Slovak-Hungarian mixed party named Most-Híd by them, the earlier unity, existing since 1998, cracked. The Most-Híd, leaving behind ethnicity-based party politics, achieved better results at the elections both in 2010 and 2012 than the SMK-MKP, which continued to define itself as an ethnic party. (The party changed its name to Party of the Hungarian Community in September 2012, as its earlier name, Party of the Hungarian Coalition, became pointless after the appearance of another (partly) Hungarian party.). Therefore, it was extremely important for the SMK-MKP, not having reached the five-percent parliamentary threshold at the two last national elections, to keep its representation in Brussels at the EP elections. However, while at the 2004 and 2009 European elections the SMK-MKP was the only one competing for the votes of Hungarians, in 2014 it had to face several rivals. Its list was headed by Pál Csáky, the former president of the SMK-MKP, who was deputy prime minister of Slovakia responsible for human rights and minorities from 1998 till 2006. He was followed on the list by Iván Farkas, the vice-president of the party in charge of economic and regional development, while the third place was taken by Ákos Horony, lawyer of the Legal Aid Service managed by the party. The Hungarian Christian Democratic Alliance (MKDSZ), a new organization with marginal support nominated candidates of Hungarian ethnicity exclusively. In the Hungarian-populated areas of Slovakia, the Most-Híd was clearly the greatest rival of the SMK-MKP: the first three candidates on the list of the Slovak-Hungarian mixed party were Zsolt Simon, József Nagy and František Šebej. There was a Hungarian candidate on the list of Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) as well: the fifth place on the list of the liberal party, winning one mandate in the end, was taken by Kálmán Petőcz, president of the Slovakian Helsinki Commission. Petőcz previously said that he would be running as a Hungarian politician, but neither on

⁴ Gubík László a Fidesz EP-listáján (“László Gubik on the Fidesz EP list”). *Itthon, ma.* 16 April 2014. http://itthon.ma/karpatmedence.php?cikk_id=3980; Downloaded 10 June 2014.

the list of the Most-Híd nor on that of the SMK-MKP because those are members of the conservative party group while he is a liberal both with respect to his political past and his convictions.

The European elections took place with an extremely low, mere 13.05% participation rate in Slovakia, by which the country – breaking its former negative record of 2004 – produced the poorest EP elections participation result of all times. The elections saw the competition of altogether 29 parties for the 13 mandates assigned to the country, and in the end, 8 of them managed to send representatives to Brussels. Although the highest number of votes was gained by the social democrat Smer led by Prime Minister Robert Fico, it came as a surprise that the ruling party acquired only 24.09% of the votes, so it could delegate four representatives to the EP, one less than in 2009. With that result, the Smer had to face a second election defeat within a short period of time after the presidential election in March 2014, which resulted in the failure of Robert Fico. As a result of this poor performance, right-wing and liberal parties of the opposition could consider themselves as the true winners of the elections by obtaining altogether nine mandates. It should be added, however, that these nine places are shared by seven parties, which makes it obvious that the scope of the Slovakian opposition parties is still very fragmented. Two mandates were gained by the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the Slovakian Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS) each, who managed to collect 13.21 and 7.75% of the votes, respectively. One mandate was obtained by the Ordinary People Association, the Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) and the New Majority (Nova) each, the latter running jointly with the Conservative Democrats (KDS) and the Civil Democrats (OKS). The Party of the Hungarian Community (SMK-MKP) and the Most-Híd obtained one-one mandate as well. The SMK-MKP got 36 629 votes (6.53%), while the Híd got 32 708 (5.83%) (see Table 1). The two extremist parties performed poorly: the Slovak National Party (SNS) lost its representation in Brussels, and the People's Party – Our Slovakia, headed by Marián Kotleba and having triumphed at the regional elections in November 2013, could not get any mandates, either.

For Hungarians, the essential question of the elections was whether they would be able to maintain their earlier level of representation in Brussels. Following the schism of the party in the summer of 2009, the SMK-MKP failed to surpass the 5% parliamentary threshold at both of the two subsequent parliamentary elections (2010, 2012). At the same time, the SMK-MKP performed better at the 2010 local elections and the 2013 regional elections than its principal rival, Most-Híd. A little after the regional elections of November 2013 the SMK-MKP announced

Gyula Bárdos as its candidate for the presidential election (to take place in March 2014). It was a landmark decision, as it was the first time that there was a Hungarian candidate at the Slovakian presidential election. The more than five-percent result achieved by the SMK-MKP indicated that the party was able to become stronger, which was in line with the opinion polls. Thus, within a time little more than half a year, five elections were held in Slovakia, including the double-ballot regional elections and the likewise double-ballot presidential election, which might partly account for the low turnout at the EP elections. On the other hand, the intense electoral period provided an excellent opportunity for the SMK-MKP to keep its voters mobilized in the framework of a basically continuous campaign from autumn 2013.

Table 1. *Results of the parties having acquired a European parliamentary mandate in Slovakia*

Name of party	Number of votes	Proportion of votes (%)	Number of mandates	Group of MEPs
Smer-SD	135 089	24,09	4	S&D*
Christian Democratic Movement	74 108	13,21	2	EPP**
Slovakian Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party	43 467	7,75	2	EPP
Ordinary People	41 829	7,46	1	ECR***
Nova, Civil Conservative Party, Conservative Democrats of Slovakia	38 316	6,83	1	ECR
Freedom and Solidarity	37 376	6,66	1	ALDE****
Party of the Hungarian Community	36 629	6,53	1	EPP
Most-Híd	32 708	5,83	1	EPP

* Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

** European People's Party

*** European Conservatives and Reformers

**** Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

With the extremely low national participation rate, two Hungarian representatives could be delegated to Brussels, which, principally, was also due to the fact that – contrary to the previous elections, – this time voter participation in Southern Slovakia did not fall behind the national rate. In fact, the district participation rate surpassed the national average in Bratislava (Pozsony), Košice (Kassa), and in half of the 16 districts partly inhabited by Hungarians. The Most-Híd could overtake the SMK-MKP in only the two biggest cities and in the

district of Dunajská Streda (Dunaszerdahely) and Rožňava (Rozsnyó), by 700 and 19 votes, respectively. The two parties finished neck and neck in Nitra (Nyitra) district (with a sporadic Hungarian population), where the SMK-MKP collected only four votes more than the rivalling party. In sum, the SMK-MKP headed by József Berényi was able to mobilize more people in 14 districts: it received twice as many votes as the Most-Híd in the districts surrounding Košice, that of Trebišov (Tóketerebes), Revúca (Nagyőrce) and Levice (Léva). In the district of Veľký Krtíš (Nagykürtös), the advantage of SMK-MKP was threefold. SMK-MKP got 400 votes more in the district of Rimavská Sobota (Rimaszombat), 600 more in the district of Galanta (Galánta), 2000 more in the district of Komárno (Komárom), and 2300 more in the district of Nové Zámky (Érsekújvár) (see Table 2) than Most-Híd. As a Slovak-Hungarian mixed party, the Most-Híd could count on Slovakian ballots – most likely, it would not have gained the EP mandate without them. The fact that the party obtained a mandate was the matter of less than 5000 votes. In the 54 districts located north of the southern districts inhabited by Hungarians, the Most-Híd got 3835 votes, while the ethnic Hungarian SMK-MKP got only 343 votes. The results in Bratislava proved to be crucial for the mixed party regarding the final outcome: the Most-Híd collected nearly five times as many votes in the capital as the SMK-MKP.

At the recent elections in Slovakia, voters increasingly took advantage of the opportunity to cast so-called preference votes for candidates on the party lists, thus changing the order of candidates on the list. The weight of preference votes became even greater at the last elections: neither of the persons heading the list of the Ordinary People, Nova, SaS and Most-Híd could keep their winning position. Zsolt Simon, heading the list of Most-Híd got about 12 511 preferential votes, while József Nagy, ranked second, won nearly 15 000. The difference in support between the two candidates was the greatest in the district of Dunajská Streda: József Nagy, inhabitant of this town, got 2 600 more votes than Zsolt Simon, so we can declare that their rivalry was decided in the district of Žitný ostrov (Csallóköz). József Nagy performed better in the Western Slovakian districts than Zsolt Simon; the latter proved to be more popular in Central and Eastern Slovakia. József Nagy's convincing result in the Western districts can be explained with the fact that he became well-known in the region during the regional elections of November 2013 as the prefect candidate of Trnava (Nagyszombat) county. There was no change in the SMK-MKP list: Pál Csáky's 19 400 preferential votes indicate that every second voter of the SMK-MKP confirmed his first position. The second person on the list, Iván Farkas got 7 000 less preference votes.

Table 2. *Election results of the SMK-MKP and the Most-Híd in the southern districts*

District	Participation rate (%)	SMK-MKP Number of votes	SMK-MKP Proportion of votes (%)	Most-Híd Number of Votes	Most-Híd Proportion of votes (%)
Bratislava districts (Pozsony)	19.62	751	1.03	3 373	4.89
Senec district (Szenc)	15.87	948	10.43	757	8.33
Dunajská Streda districts (Dunaszerdahely)	15.03	5 597	38.74	6 297	43.59
Galanta district (Galánta)	12.14	2 539	27.19	1 919	20.55
Komárno district (Komárom)	13.22	5 216	46.62	3 155	28.20
Levice district (Léva)	12.99	2 851	23.59	1 468	12.15
Nitra district (Nyitra)	12.14	629	3.88	625	3.85
Nové Zámky district (Érsekújvár)	13.56	5 177	32.58	2 885	18.16
Šaľa district (Vágsellye)	11.23	1 229	25.54	819	17.02
(Losonc)	11.71	1 194	18.02	810	12.22
Revúca district (Nagyroce)	12.13	706	19.28	347	9.47
Rimavská Sobota district (Rimaszombat)	14.21	2 065	23.37	1 660	18.79
Veľký Krtíš district (Nagykürtös)	13.50	1 330	27.87	486	10.18
Košice districts (Kassa)	13.09	772	2.89	994	3.68
Košice neighbourhood district	11.35	1 445	14.36	705	7.01
Michalovce district (Nagymihály)	10.61	990	11.06	630	7.04
Rožňava district (Rozsnyó)	11.53	1 025	18.96	1 044	19.31
Trebišov district (Tóketerebes)	11.01	1 822	20.69	899	10.20

The relations of the SMK-MKP and the Most-Híd have not been undisturbed since the party schism of 2009, which means that despite the approval of the document entitled “The fundamental conditions of the survival and development of Slovakian Hungarians” (the so-called “Minority Minimum⁵), created jointly in co-operation with the Roundtable of Hungarians in Slovakia (an association of Slovakian Hungarian civil organisations), there is virtually no co-operation between the two parties. It remains an open-ended issue how the two Hungarian representatives from Slovakia will co-operate in the European Parliament – in fact, both of them will be sitting in the faction of the European People’s Party (EPP). Pál Csáky was deputy prime minister responsible for human rights and minorities for eight years, and his work has had various connections with the activities of the Hungarian MEPs from the Carpathian Basin, who have fought for the recognition of national (autochthonous) minorities over the past decade. Csáky has made it clear: it is not Slovakia’s national interests, but those of the Hungarian community that he wishes to stand for in Brussels, thus he would like to call attention to the unfair practices of Slovakia regarding the issues of citizenship and language use, among others. József Nagy has a reputation as a politician specialized in environmental protection. Thus he highlighted environmental protection in his EP campaign, but besides he also intends to work on the protection of ethnic minorities; his goal is to promote the creation of a European regulation for the protection of autochthonous minorities.

In contrast to Hungarians in Slovakia, there was no competition at the European Parliamentary elections in Transylvania: ethnic Hungarians appeared only on the list of the DAHR. With László Tótkés’s decision to run on the Fidesz list it was clear that the Hungarian People’s Party of Transylvania would not register its own election list. As for the third Hungarian political organization, the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP), it supported the list of the DAHR in accordance with its agreement with the party, and the first two places of the list were taken by the former MEPs of the party, Gyula Winkler and Csaba Sógor.

In Romania, voters elected representatives for 32 parliamentary seats at the European parliamentary elections. The elections brought the overwhelming victory of the ruling left-wing alliance; the party

⁵ A szlovákiai magyarok megmaradásának és fejlődésének alapfeltételei (The fundamental conditions of the survival and development of Slovakian Hungarians). *Scribd.com*, 25 September 2012. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/106793067/A-szlovákiai-magyarok-megmaradasanak-es-fejlodesenek-alapfeltetelei-Alairt-valtozat>; Downloaded 10 June 2014.

leadership of the National Liberals resigned as a result of the disappointing outcome, while right-wing parties deteriorated each other's camps.

More than 18 million voters were eligible to vote, and nearly 6 million of them cast the ballot; the participation rate was 32.44%. This was a five-percent increase compared to the 27.67% participation rate of 2009, which coincided with prior expectations. The reason for the increase of participation was that Romanian parties interpreted the EP elections as a precursor for the autumn presidential elections, so they mobilized their voters. The parties on the right wanted to clarify the balance of power, while the left-wing party alliance wished to make its advantage undisputed against its would-be rivals.

The elections were won convincingly by the electoral alliance composed of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the National Union for the Progress of Romania (UNPR) and the Conservative Party (PC). The alliance received 2 093 234 votes (37.60%), which brought the party 16 European parliamentary mandates, i.e. half of the seats allocated to Romania. These MEPs will be sitting in the faction of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D). Although the left-wing block hallmarked by the name of Prime Minister Victor Ponta triumphed at the elections, it failed to achieve the prior objective of performing above 40%.

The second place was obtained by the National Liberal Party (PNL), having recently quit the government, with 835 531 votes, which was 15% of the eligible votes, and was worth six European parliamentary mandates. The result is a major defeat for the party, which expected a performance above 20%, thus party president Crin Antonescu, deputy president Klaus Johannis and all the vice-presidents resigned from their posts the day after the elections. Before his resignation, the party president made the leadership approve that, in contrast to the previous practice, the MEPs of the PNL would be sitting in the faction of the European People's Party (EPP), and not in that of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). This decision had been circulated in the Romanian press for some time, but Antonescu consistently denied it, what is more, he assured Belgian politician Guy Verhofstadt of his firm support for his election as president of the European Commission. From the perspective of PNL, working within a bigger and more influential faction can have some obvious advantages, especially since, with the weakening of the PDL, they can become the strongest Romanian member party of the EPP. In the long term, the PNL would like to be the most significant actor of the Romanian political right, and being a member of the European People's Party can also help the party to achieve its goal.

The third place went to the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL), which collected 680 853 votes (12.23%), and thus obtained five mandates. The performance of the PDL – even though it was the weakest result of the past decade – can be interpreted as a success because it constitutes a similar size political base as that of the PNL, and a much greater one than that of the People’s Movement Party backed by president Traian Basescu, so the PDL will be a substantial force among right-wing parties in the future. PDL’s representatives will also be fortifying the faction of the People’s Party.

Actor Mircea Diaconu, independent candidate came in fourth with 379 582 votes, which is 6.81% of the votes. Originally, Diaconu was candidate of the PNL list, but due to a conflict of interests – he was both an MP in Romania and the director of a theatre in Bucharest – the party took him off its list. The well-known and popular Diaconu, whom many considered to be the victim of the system, basically earned votes enough for two mandates, and as a result of that, he left a lot of fractional votes behind, which affected the number of mandates obtained by the other parties as well.

Having won 350 689 votes, 6.29% of the votes, the DAHR finished fifth, and the Alliance obtained two mandates in the European Parliament. These Hungarian representatives will join the rows of the European People’s Party. Although there was hope for getting a third DAHR mandate for some time due to the high number of fractional votes because of Mircea Draconu’s outstanding performance, in the end, only the two MEPs of the Alliance currently in office, Gyula Winkler and Csaba Sógor can continue their work in Brussels. The magnitude of the 350 000 votes falls far behind the 431 000 votes collected in 2009 by the DAHR. The Hungarian voters were not as efficiently mobilized as in 2009, though their proportion still somewhat exceeded the proportion of those voting for the Romanian parties.

While Romanian voters were mobilized by the competition between the major Romanian parties, focused on the presidential elections, Hungarian voters were not motivated to participate. The low Hungarian participation rate could be mainly explained by the general disillusionment with the European Union and to its indifference regarding minority policy, as well as the failed realization of hopes for a fast increase in the standards of living after the accession. In accordance with the agreement between the DAHR and the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP), the latter supported the Alliance at the elections despite the fact that in the end, they did not nominate anyone on the list, as they could have run only for an obviously hopeless position. The Hungarian People’s Party of Transylvania (EMNP)

did not draw up a list at the elections. Instead, they recommended to László Tókécs that he accept the Fidesz-KDNP's offer, and run for an EP seat in Hungary. The lack of a broader co-operation can be explained with the election results of 2012: at those elections, the EMNP was unable to provide such a voter support that would have given them a strong bargaining position. The DAHR had no interests in legitimizing the People's Party; rather it strived to make an agreement with the MPP so that it could not be accused of unwillingness to cooperate. Moreover, winning the support of the voters of the MPP was equally important in certain electoral districts for DAHR. The agreement was facilitated by the fact that for the moment, the MPP can increase the number of its voters to the detriment of the EMNP, so it is currently its interest to co-operate with the DAHR. The DAHR can also win from this bargain, because it cannot win over the voters of the MPP and the EMNP in the short run, so it is more advantageous if these votes are collected by an MPP willing to join the DAHR in certain situations than losing these votes altogether. Although the EMNP did not take part in the campaign formally, it organized an autonomy campaign in Transylvania in this period, and several of its politicians declared that there was no reason to participate in the elections, as the European representation of Hungarians in Transylvania was already guaranteed by László Tókécs' taken-for-granted mandate. The strategy of the EMNP was reasonable: due to the election results and the DAHR-MPP agreement, the party had no scope for action. With the potential elimination of the DAHR, the European Parliament would have become a forum where only the representative of the EMNP is present; moreover, a potential DAHR result below five percent would have weakened the party's position in Transylvania as well.

The decrease of the number of the votes cast for the DAHR (see Table 3) is noticeable in each Transylvanian county, but it is exceedingly high in Maramureş (Máramaros), and it is bigger than the average in Mureş (Maros), Covasna (Kovászna), Bihor (Bihar) counties. The smallest drop can be observed in Satu Mare, but in this county interim parliamentary elections were also held, where Szabolcs Nagy, the candidate of the DAHR also ran, which can explain the higher participation rate. The drop was much lower than the average in Cluj (Kolozs), Braşov (Brassó) and Caraş-Severin (Krassó-Szörény) counties.

Similarly to the DAHR's result, two mandates were obtained by the People's Movement Party (PMP), backed by president Traian Basescu and hallmarked by Elena Udrea, which party collected 345 973 votes (6.21%) at the EP elections. This performance is

rather disappointing since the party expected a support above 10%. The PMP was unable to position itself as an equal partner against the PDL, so the preparation for the presidential election might be founded mostly on a PNL-PDL co-operation. The five-percent parliamentary threshold proved too high for Dan Diaconescu People's Party (PP-DD), which got into the Parliament in 2012, but collected only 3.67% of the votes in 2014; for the extremist Greater Romania Party (PRM), which got into the EP in 2009, but received 2.7% in 2014; as well as for the Civic Force (FC) headed by ex-Prime Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, performing 2.6%.

Table 3. *Votes cast for the DAHR in 2009 and 2014 by counties*

Transylvanian counties	2009	2014	decrease (%)
Harghita (Hargita)	97164	80708	16.94
Mureş (Maros)	74516	57082	23.40
Covasna (Kovászna)	53315	39700	25.54
Satu Mare (Szatmár)	37516	35754	4.70
Bihar (Bihar)	44948	35209	21.67
Cluj (Kolozs)	33525	29193	12.93
Sălaj (Szilágy)	22116	18173	17.83
Braşov (Brassó)	12062	10527	12.73
Arad (Arad)	10003	8296	17.07
Maramureş (Máramaros)	9650	6371	33.98
Timiş (Temes)	7520	6137	18.35
Hunedoara (Hunyad)	5830	4961	14.91
Bistriţa-Năsăud (Beszterce-Naszód)	5186	4277	17.53
Alba (Fehér)	4680	3664	21.71
Sibiu (Szeben)	2524	2150	14.82
Caraş-Severin (Krassó- Szörény)	853	755	11.49

As a result of the work of the Hungarian representatives from the Carpathian Basin, minority issues and the most important problems of ethnic Hungarian communities have been constantly on the agenda of the European Parliament and its committees for the past ten years. Significant work has been done by the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages of the European Parliament, whose fundamental objective is to represent the interests of autochthonous ethnic minorities and constitutional regions in European politics, by shading light on the grievances of these communities and by promoting support for them.

Thanks to the Subcarpathian and Vojvodinian representatives having received a mandate on the list of the Fidesz-KDNP, and also to the results of the SMK-MKP and the DAHR, we can affirm that the representation of Hungarian communities of the Carpathian Basin will be fortified in the EP in the five-year term beginning after the elections of 2014. The role of the European Parliament is increasingly important not only in the European decision-making system, but also with respect to the European public. The next period may be favourable from the perspective of the settlement of the problems of national minorities, as more and more legal documents are adopted by the European institutions that can be used as points of reference for minority protection in the future. Moreover, the EP representation of Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary is also significant because this is what can reinforce the legitimation of paying more attention to the issue of national minorities on the European level.