

„Before the EU accession waiting for Schengen”

The criminal geography of the ukrainian-hungarian border in
the nineties

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*”...try to make a good use of what you know
and by doing so, in time you will be able to reveal hidden things
that you are looking for. Make a good use of what you know,
and it will help you to clarify what you do not yet know.”*

REMBRANDT

Introduction

The change of the political system in the eastern European region opened up new prospects in Central and Eastern Europe, formerly isolated from the rest of the continent. The central and eastern European countries had been and are now again an organic part of Europe, and now they have the opportunity of re-joining the mainstream of European democracy. Our membership in the NATO is an important milestone on our way leading to intergration in the Euro-Atlantic structures. A similarly important stage is going to be our long-awaited accession to the European Union. An increasingly close cooperation, while the member states maintain their national identity, may lead to the emergence of a sense of common European identity. Safety has always been a priority of integration, but since the 11th of September 2001 a particular attention has been focused on this issue in Europe as well. Safety¹ is a complex notion of which public and domestic security are organic parts. The defence of the frontiers is a field of public safety. This question has become more important since the 1st of May 1999, when most of the Executive Regulations of the Schengen Treaty² were integrated into Article I of the Amsterdam Treaty (together with Article III of the EU). It means that the integrating countries are supposed to meet the Schengen norms³ at the moment of their accession.

All this means that the Republic of Hungary has not an alternative but meeting the Schengen norms if the country is determined to join the European Union. The system of defending the borders should therefore be adjusted to meet the criteria of defending the future external⁴ and internal⁵ borders. The Hungarian – Ukrainian border, for instance, is probably going to become an external frontier. This is further complicated by the fact that the citizens of the Ukraine need a visa to enter the Union.

¹ **safety:** *A situation free of wars, that is, a general order and state of affairs in which peoples and nations are able to develop their society, culture and material wealth peacefully.* Source: György Ritecz – János Sallai: *The Borders of the Republic of Hungary, the Safety of the Borders in the Face of EU Integration and the Schengen Treaty.* Budapest, 1998, Hans Seidi Foundation, p. 5

² The free movement of people between the Schengen states is now a reality in all the member states that signed the Executive Regulations of the Treaty. People are therefore allowed to cross the internal borders at any point without control. While the border control of passengers had been abolished on the internal borders between Belgium, Germany, France, Luxemburg, Holland, Spain and Portugal before the 26th of March 1995, it happened on the Italian-Austrian border somewhat later, on the 1st of April 1998. Passenger traffic to and from Greece is now also free of control, although it was not the case when the report was written (1997). The member states of the Northern Passport Union joined the Schengen Treaty on the 25th of March 2001, whereas three EU member states (Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland) put forward their reservations regarding the Treaty.

³ A **strict control and defence of the Union's external borders is an important requirement**, and it is only possible to achieve this if all the countries concerned are ready and able to implement the standardization of the theory and practice of defending their borders. A reliable computer-based screening of the people whose entry is not desirable is also indispensable, and so is the joint discussion and evaluation of the experience of standardized theory and practice of defending the borders. In order to achieve all this, the Border Guard and other authorities involved are supposed to cooperate closely and efficiently.

⁴ **external borders:** all land borders, airports and sea ports of the member states, which are *not* the internal borders of the Contracting Parties.

⁵ **internal borders:** The land borders of the Contracting Parties – the signatories of the Schengen Treaty – and the airports and sea ports that are involved in domestic traffic and transport, and traffic and transport the starting point and destination of which are all within the territory of the Schengen member states.

The sovereignty and equality of the countries make it necessary to mutually honour each other's lawful interests. This requirement, dictated by international laws, is a right and, at the same time an obligation, to all countries. It is most clearly seen in the relationship of neighbouring countries.

The very notion of a state border⁶ suggests that it does not only separate but also connects the two neighbours, so implementing the rights and obligations on and along the borders is not possible without a certain order of procedures. International law refers to this order of procedures as border administration. As for the maintenance of the marks of the border, the Hungarian Border Guard are responsible for the following:

- the care and maintenance of the wooden, granite and reinforced concrete border markers that are on Hungarian territory,
- the care and maintenance of the wooden, the reinforced concrete and stone border markers standing along the centreline of the border and carrying an odd identification number.

The main events in the 20th-century history of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border are the following:

- The present borders of the Republic of Hungary mostly came into being as a result of the Versailles Peace Treaty. The borders were specifically defined in §27 of Article II of the treaty signed in the Little Trianon Castle on the 4th of June 1920. Upon signing the treaty, the appointed border committees determined the line of the border on the spot, and entered the new borders in the related documents. Czechoslovakia became Hungary's new neighbour in the north and north-east.
- As a result of the 1st and 2nd Viennese Resolutions, when Hungary was given back extensive territories in the north-eastern Carpathians and in the south, the Hungarian borders lengthened significantly during the time of World War II.
- After World War II, the Peace Treaty of Paris mostly restored the old Versailles borders of Hungary, and deprived Hungary of some further territories, the so-called "bridgehead of Pozsony," that is, several villages on the southern bank of the Danube opposite Pozsony (Bratislava, the Slovakian capital). At the same time, Subcarpathia was taken away from Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union, and Hungary had the USSR as a new neighbour in the north-east. After the war, the **re-demarcation of the Hungarian – Soviet border took place in 1948-49.**
- After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the **Ukraine became Hungary's new neighbour in 1992.**

⁶ **state border:**

- a.) the continual imaginary line that separates the territory (sovereignty) of a country from that of its neighbours on the surface and in the depIBC of land, sea and in the air.
- b.) the meeting point/line of the sovereign territories of two neighbouring countries
- c.) the imaginary continuous vertical plane that surrounds the territory of a country over land, sea, and in the air, and determines the sphere of sovereignty of the state.

- After the early 1950s, Hungary made border administration treaties with all her neighbours, in order to determine the exact lines of the common borders, and the order of changing these lines when necessary. Mutually agreed minor adjustments, exchanges of small territories have taken place, and the adjustments have always been duly registered in bilateral documents.

Specifying the border between two neighbouring countries is always a **political issue**. Hungary has valid international treaties with all her neighbours, regarding the specification of the borderline, management of the cross-border traffic and the maintenance of order along the border. According to their contents, these treaties may fall into one of the following categories:

- border administration treaties,
- treaties regarding the border markers,
- treaties regulating cross-border traffic and transport,
- other (miscellaneous) treaties.

The border treaties related to the Hungarian – Ukrainian border are the following:

- 1.) The treaty and its supplements about cross-border railroad traffic signed between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Hungary and the Ministry of Transport of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Moscow on the 15th of September 1947.
- 2.) The treaty about the administration of the border, cooperation in issues regarding the common border and mutual assistance at the border, signed between the Republic of Hungary and the Ukraine in Kiev on the 19th of May 1995.
- 3.) The treaty regarding the joint use of the bridge across Tisza River in the frontier zone, signed between the Government of the People's Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the 11th of June 1963.
- 4.) The agreement on the border stations on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Budapest on the 26th of February 1993.
- 5.) The agreement about the simplified procedure of crossing the border for the citizens of the two countries living in the border counties, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine.
- 6.) The agreement regarding the management of the water courses in the frontier zone, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Budapest on the 28th of July 1993 (Gov. Decree No. 120/1994 (IX.8.)).
- 7.) The agreement regarding the transference and acceptance of persons on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Budapest on the 26th of February 1993 (Act XXIV/1994).

- 8.) The implementation agreement of the treaty related to the transference and acceptance of persons on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Budapest on the 26th of February 1993 (Act XXIV/1994). The implementation agreement was signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Kiev on the 27th of October 1994.
- 9.) The agreement related to the joint fight against organized crime, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Kiev on the 19th of May 1995.
- 10.) The treaty about the administration of the border, cooperation in issues regarding the common border and mutual assistance at the border, signed between the Republic of Hungary and the Ukraine in Kiev on the 19th of May 1995. Published as Act LV/1998.
- 11.) The agreement about the simplified procedure of crossing the border for the citizens of the two countries living in the border counties, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Budapest on the 26th of February 1993.
- 12.) The agreement about cross-border railroad traffic signed between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Kiev on the 19th of May 1995. Published as Gov. Decree 176/1996 (XI.29).
- 13.) The agreement about the reconstruction of the road bridge over Tisza River in the frontier zone, signed by the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Ukraine in Budapest on the 16th of January 1996. Published as Gov. Decree 132/1996 (VIII.28).

As for the Hungarian - Ukrainian border, in the days of socialism – that is, before the period discussed here – this border used to be the western border of the Soviet Union, and as such, it was very heavily guarded and defended. In addition to that, bureaucratic obstacle also made the approach of the border difficult. At that time, Záhony was the only border station. On the Hungarian side of this border there has never been an Electronic Warning System (EWS), unlike for instance the Hungarian side of the Hungarian – Austrian border. On the Ukrainian side the system still exist, it has not been removed, although it has not been used for a long time.

After the change of the political system the border has been guarded and defended somewhat less rigidly, but the bureaucratic obstacles in the way of people crossing the border have not been eliminated – what is more, they have become even more complicated in many respects. In spite of the difficulties the traffic across the border is significant. Many of the people who cross the border do so because of the worsening living standards and declining economy in the Ukraine make it necessary for them to look for the possibility of doing some small-scale merchandise across the border. On the other hand, the low fuel prices in the Ukraine attract many Hungarian motorists to fill up their tanks on the other side and to smuggle fuel across the border.

A peculiar feature of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border is the special privilege granted to the citizens living in the border counties on both sides. In possession of a special permit, these citizens are allowed to cross the border through a simplified procedure. The history of the system is the following:

The re-demarcation documents signed in 1949 were only followed by a government decree regarding the order and administration of the border in 1962. (This decree is no longer in effect). Before the war, there had been an agreement with Czechoslovakia regarding the simplified procedure of crossing the border for the people living in the border counties. No similar agreement was made with the Soviet Union. Although a "simplified" scheme was invented for the people living in the border counties, but the system contained a set of bureaucratic elements and "brakes" that did not allow the system to work efficiently. For example, a passport for simplified border crossing was only issued to someone who had a pressing reason (e. g. the death or serious illness of a relative in the other country etc.). Only the following border stations were allowed to be used::

Záhony – Csop
 Lónya – Zvonkoye
 Barabás – Kosino
 Beregsurány – Lushanka
 Kispalágy – Nagypalágy (Veliki Palad)
 Tiszabecs – Vilok

On the Hungarian side of the border, the people living at the following settlements were allowed to use the "simplified" system:

Derecske	Csaroda
Záhony	Tizacsécse
Tiszabездéd	Milota
Zsurk	Sonkád
Tiszaszentmárton	Uszka
Tiszamogyorós	Magosliget
Lónya	Botpalád
Mátyus	Kispalád
Tizakerecseny	Kishódos
Eperjeske	Nagyhódos
Gelénes	Tiszabecs
Barabás	Garbolc
Bregdaróc	Tiszaadony
Beregsurány	Tiszavid
Márokpapi	Tiszaszalka
Tarpa	Gergelyiugornya
Szatmárcseke	Jánd
Túristvándi	Gulács
Kölcse	Tivadar
Vámosatya	Hete
Tizakóród	

The simplified scheme continued to exist in the 1990, and the majority of the people living at the settlements above made a use of it, and became involved in the "wheeling and dealing" –that is, the illegal trade across the border.

In order to prepare for the accession, it is necessary to reveal and analyze the changes that have taken place along the Hungarian – Ukrainian border in the 1990s. The conclusions and observations based on such an analysis may lead us to the transformation and improvement of the management and administration of the border, so that the borderline no longer separates but connects the neighbours. For an analysis it is necessary to have a close look at the border zone. The related data⁷ are analyzed with the method of criminal statistics⁸.

The starting point is therefore the geographical location, in this particular case the Hungarian – Ukrainian border zone.⁹ The Border Guard as an organization dealing with foreigners is entitled to use its related authorizations in the whole territory of the country. Most of the actions performed by the Border Guard are, nevertheless, restricted to the border zone, our observations are also focused on the areas defined in Decree 66/1997 of the Minister for the Interior.

The research is determined by the fact that it was only possible to rely on the data supplied by the local law enforcement forces. The statistical data have been supplied in compliance with the legal regulations created in the 1990s, requiring various authorities to provide statistics regarding their respective activities. I wish to express my gratitude to Brig. Gen. **István Samu** from the Border Guard, Head of the Police Department of the Border Guard, Col. **Zoltán Fazekas**, head of the Department of Surveillance and Col. **István Szepesi**, commander of the Nyírbátor District of the Border Guard, who furnished the statistical data required for the analysis.

The Major Characteristics of the Ukrainian – Hungarian Border (Zone)¹⁰

On the Hungarian side the whole segment of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border falls into Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County. The county also has common borders with Romania, south of the Ukrainian segment of the border. The county borders on Slovakia as well, on a short segment of Tisza River, north of the Ukrainian segment. Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, a new county put together from fragments of three former counties after World War I, has traditionally been the poorest and least developed part of the country. It is far away from the dynamically developing regions of the nation, unemployment is high, the number of Roma minority is also high, deprivation and poverty are common among the rural population. As for GDP/person, the county is the last but one out of the 19 counties.

The length of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border is **136,7 km**. It belongs to the authority of the Nyírbátor District of the Border Guard. In Hungary it is common to have rivers as borders. 62% of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border falls on Tisza River and its tributaries. According to Decree 66/1967 (XII. 10.) of the Minister for the Interior¹¹, the

⁷ The statistics included here are the official data issued by the related authorities.

⁸ *Criminal statistics does not analyze an area in a static view, but it also includes the functions of the area, the volume of traffic and transport in the region, the events, characteristics and pace of life, and night life, etc.* From: Horst Herold: Geography and crime. Review of the Ministry of the Interior. 1973. Vol. 17, p. 81.

⁹ The border zone is defined in Act XXXII/1997 as the area of the settlements along the border, listed in Decree No. 66/97 of the Minister for the Interior, and the area of the airports and harbours open for international traffic and transport.

¹⁰ From: Ukrainian – Hungarian Relations, Budapest, 2001

¹¹ Amended with Decree 30/2001 (XII.11) of the Minister for the Interior

authority of the Nyírbátor Border Guard District comprises 137 settlements. Out of the 137 settlements, 11 have their own Border Guard stations. 6 are located along the Hungarian – Ukrainian border: Záhony, Lónya, Barabás, Beregsurány, Tiszabecs and Zajta. Near Zajta three borders meet: Hungary, the Ukraine and Romania.

Three out of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County's ten statistical subregions are directly on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border. The Fehérgyarmat subregion has 49, that of Vásárosnamény has 29 and that of Kisvárdá-Záhony comprises 30 settlements. The total number of the three statistical subregions is therefore 108. The three subregions subject to our examinations lie on two areas of the Plains, the Upper Tisza Valley and the Nyírség. The north-west of the Nyírség is covered with sand carried there by the wind. The surface is undulating, whereas the other subregions near the Ukrainian border are almost perfectly flat alluvial plains, shaped by the deposits of prehistoric rivers. The Nyírség has a varied surface, eolic forms are created by the winds and drifting sand, ridges, mounds, longitudinal and conical dunes etc. The Upper Tisza is almost entirely flat, only some now dry riverbeds break the monotony of the surface. The topsoil in the Upper Tisza Valley, created by the rivers, is usually of higher quality and fertility than the dry sands and humic soils of the Nyírség, that often do not contain more than 0,5-1% organic materials.

The Ukrainian – Hungarian border zone is generally cooler and receive more precipitation than the inner parts of the Plains. The annual average temperature is 9,5-9,6 °C, the average number of sunny hours is 1960-1980. The annual precipitation is 580-630 mm in the southern and western parts, and 650-700 mm in the eastern parts. The number of days with a permanent snow is around 40 in the southern part and may reach 50 in the north-east.

The region belongs to the catchment area of Tisza River. The north-eastern part of the Nyírség is not particularly rich in water courses, and in rainy years the canals drain the excess water into the Tisza and its tributaries. The area is threatened by floods, so many defensive training banks have been built there. Subsoil water is usually reached at a depth of 2-4 m, and the underground water reserves supply the necessary quantity of water to the wells. Its is generally not necessary to bore wells deeper than 100 m. The quality of the water is satisfactory. At Kisvárdá thermal water of 53 °C, with a high iron content has been found, and at Fehérgyarmat thermal water of 44 °C has been discovered. The thermal water is now used in spas.

The demographic characteristics of the three subregions along the Ukrainian border are different from each other. According to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics, 31,2% of the county's area is covered by the three subregions, where 25,6% of the county's total population live (1998). The average territory of the settlements is 17,2 km², with Vásárosnamény as the only one that exceeds 60 km². We find here two of the settlements of the county with the smallest administrative territories, Győröcske (2,13 km²) and Nemesborzova (2,2 km²).

Although out of the three areas examined, the Kisvárdá-Záhony subregion has the smallest territory, it has the largest population, almost as large as that of the two others put together. The population density in the area is 83 people/km², still well below the national average. There are significant inequalities within the region, as e.g. the density of the Záhony-Kisvárdá subregion is 132, exceeding the county average, whereas in the Fehérgyarmat subregion only 56 people live on one square kilometre, which is the lowest among all the subregions. There is a slight reduction in the number of the population in the Vásárosnamény subregion, and a slight increase in the other two (1998 data). It appears to contradict to the high migration rate, which is the same in all the three subregions – people

tend to migrate to other parts of the country. The positive statistics are the result of the high natural reproduction rate of the Roma minority. The process, however, leads to the increase of social and ethnic tensions. It also adversely affects the labour market (high number of unqualified and unskilled workforce, low working morals, increasing poverty etc.). Statistics of migration show that migration from this area significantly exceeded the rate of migration from the other parts of the county. (data from the period 1990-1998).

Statistic regarding unemployment are also different in the three subregions. Although the offices of the County Employment Centre do not follow the distribution of the subregions, there are no significant territorial differences, so their statistics are usable for our purposes. The December 1999 data suggest that the unemployment rate of 25% in the Fehérgyarmat subregion, the 30,5% rate in the Vásárosnamény, significantly exceed both the county average (19,4%) and the national average (9,6%). Kisvárdá's subregion, with its figure of 16,4% is below the county average. The railway reloading centre of Záhony and its vicinity has a significant role in the relatively low unemployment rate. In spite of the difficulties in the eastern markets, and the reduction of east-west transport across the railway reloading centre, it is still one of the most important employers. It is well illustrated by the fact, that unemployment in Záhony has been below 5% for several years now. At Fehérgyarmat and Vásárosnamény the problem is that the proportion of people with only 8-grade elementary school and people who have been out of work for a long time (more than 720 days) is very high.

The quality of communications and transport facilities is one of the most important indicators of the general standards of infrastructure. The dominant axis of transport is the Budapest – Szolnok – Debrecen – Nyíregyháza – Záhony – Kiev route. Other major national, regional and local routes branch out of this corridor. The other important axis in the border zone is the Nyíregyháza – Vásárosnamény – Beregszász (Ukr. Beregovo) line. The settlements near the communications routes running through the Kisvárdá – Záhony subregion are in the most advantageous position. The accessibility of the settlements in the Szatmár and Bereg areas by road is not very good, as they are far away from the county capital. The settlements on the Szatmár Plains are in the most disadvantageous situation, as it takes more than 90 minutes for people living here to reach Nyíregyháza. In the case of some of the villages along the border this time is even longer, as Kishódos, Nagyhódos, Magosliget and Garbolc cannot be reached from Nyíregyháza within two hours. The isolation of these settlements is further increased by the fact that crossing Tisza and Szamos Rivers is not easy. The only bridge across the Tisza is at Vásárosnamény, and the two bridges across the Szamos are at Csenger and Tunyogmatolcs. In addition to the bridges, there are ferries across the Tisza at two places, between Aranyosapáti and Tiszaadony, and between Tiszaogyorós and Lónya. There are three ferries on the Szamos: Olcsva-Olcsvaapáti, Szamosszeg-Panyola and at Szamossályi. These ferries are able to carry vehicles as well. In addition to this, if the water level of the river permits, a floating bridge across the Tisza is assembled at Lónya. Similar is the situation in the field of railroads, and the contrast is perhaps even sharper as Záhony and its neighbourhood is in an exceptionally good position, whereas many of the small settlements along the border do not have a railway connection at all.

Significant differences are observed between Záhony and the other two subregions in other fields of infrastructure, too. The number of households connected to the sewerage system, the number of schools, the number of business ventures/km², the indicators of growth of the enterprises all show that Kisvárdá and its vicinity is in a more advantageous position than the others.

The Statistical Situation of the Hungarian – Ukrainian Border in the 1990s

New phenomena were observed on both the Hungarian and Ukrainian sides of the border in the 1990s. Formerly, very few people were able to cross the very strictly guarded Soviet border. On the Hungarian side, small border guard stations, with small numbers of personnel, performed the defence of the frontier. After the change of the political system, the borders suddenly came into the focus of attention, as a high number of people wanted to cross them both legally and illegally. The reaction on both sides was a stricter border guard service. The post-Soviet model of border defence was abolished, and on its ruins a new model has been built. As part of the process new laws had passed the Hungarian Parliament as well, and by the 1st of May the Hungarian Border Guard had become a fully professional organization, the members of which were no longer drafted.

In accordance with Point 1 of §43 of Act XXXII/1997 on the Defence of the Borders and Point 4 of §16 of Act I/1973 on Penal Procedures the Border Guard are authorized and obliged to investigate in the following cases¹²:

- illegal residence in the country (§214 of the Penal Code)
- illegal border crossing (§217 of the Penal Code)
- smuggling people across the border (§218 of the Penal Code)
- damaging border markers (§220 of the Penal Code)
- forgery of passports and other documents (§274 of the Penal Code).

The table bellow summarizes the illegal activities against which the Border Guard are fighting.

The table only contains data that are officially collected by the Border Guard.

¹² If the suspicion of such illegal activity arises.

Offences at the Border ¹³ (1990-2000)

Crime/offence	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Remark
IBC ¹⁴ cr ¹⁵ inward	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	arrested
IBC offc ¹⁶ inward	7	29	33	65	1203	34	77	254	716	775	1122	arrested
IBC cr outward	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	arrested
IBC offc outward	1	7	7	0	42	3	0	0	0	4	0	arrested
IBC cr outward	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	not arrested
IBC offc outward	2	0	13	62	12	4	4	5	2	1	0	not arrested
IBC cr inward	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	not arrested
IBC offc inward	1	3	11	21	467	31	35	61	152	151	0	not arrested
IBC total	13	39	64	147	1724	72	116	321	870	931	1122	
Smuggler of people	0	0	1	0	15	0	21	31	9	15	32	
P.c.r.bi. ¹⁷ assistant	0	3	2	2	21	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Smuggler of goods	0	3	7	12	27	37	19	5	11	8	4	
Abuse of revenue goods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	234	158	109	
Other cr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	00	7	9	13	
Other offc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	105	56	41	
Illegal residence	0	0	0	0	46	10	5	214	8	13	13	
Forgery of doc.	0	0	12	159	1177	308	274	0	74	68	67	
Smuggler of arms cr	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Arms, radioactive materials. offc	0	0	0	0	8	0	2	0	0	0	1	
Damaging border marker cr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	
Forging border marker offc	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	41	1	0	0	
Vh. theft ¹⁸ cr	0	0	8	51	140	155	100	6	33	20	14	
Arbitrary use of vh. cr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Offending the order of the border offc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	637	86	243	
Offense by foreign person offc	0	0	20	1372	4302	1071	1055	831	695	349	124	
Traffic offc	0	0	2	4	0	0	5	489	1018	944	84	
Warrant, apprehension	0	0	2	1	16	8	6	6	31	41	54	
Trespassing international law	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Abuse of radio-active material cr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Drug traffic cr	0	0	2	7	87	129	448	407	3	0	0	
Other, total	0	10	56	1610	5043	1717	1937	2031	2866	1767	0	
All together	13	49	120	1757	6767	1789	2053	2352	3736	2698	1122	

¹³ From: Head Department of Border Defence, Ministry of the Interior

¹⁴ **IBC: illegal border crossing**

¹⁵ **cr:** crime

¹⁶ **offc:** (minor) offence

¹⁷ **p.c.r.b.i.:** person crossing the border illegally

¹⁸ **vh:** vehicle

From the data above, I have come to the following conclusions:

- The crimes and offences on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border clearly indicate that the main direction of migration is from the east to the west – that is, the streaming of people is more intensive inward than outward.
- In spite of the increasing number of arrests the assistants of the trespassers are relatively rarely apprehended – contrary to the general belief – as the persons crossing the border illegally often come from distant countries, and they have difficulties in communicating with local smugglers of people. Local people are, on the other hand, often distrustful with strangers and foreigners, so they try not to be involved in such activities. Another important thing is that the remark "not arrested" does not always mean that the persons were not known to the law enforcement bodies. They are often taken into custody and questioned, but the difficulties in finding evidence often lead to releasing the persons in question.
- The use of forged or manipulated documents has become increasingly popular with people who are determined to reach the western half Europe. This tendency is expected to continue. Although the Schengen visa is a safe document not, easy to counterfeit, it is certain that we are going to meet forged and manipulated papers.
- Contrary to news and reports regularly appearing in the media, the number of incidents in connection with weapons, drugs and radioactive materials has been relatively low on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border. We are, naturally, not satisfied as the well-known circumstances (the increase of the rate of violent crimes, corruption etc.) the relatively positive situation may easily change for the worse any time.
- When the people attempting to cross the border illegally are apprehended and questioned by the border guards, it turns out that they usually approach the Ukrainian side of the border in large, well-organized groups. They use all possible means to achieve their goal, crossing the border, sometimes even get small boats to cross the Tisza. The "green border" is the site of smuggling people and goods.
- The outstandingly high figures of 1994 are, in my opinion, the results of the new immigration regulations that came into effect that year.
- The good cooperation between the border guards on the two sides is well exemplified by the fact that the number of damaging the border markers is negligible.
- In addition to the registration of people crossing the border illegally, or staying in the country without valid documents, their monitoring is equally important. The results in this field are good, which is not the case with the apprehension of wanted people.
- As the equipment of the border stations has been continually modernized in the 1990s, and the means of detecting offenders are not efficient, people wishing to cross the border now tend to opt to cross it through the "green border." The statistics of illegal border crossing show an increase in the number of such events, and this is expected to continue in the future as well.
- A comparison of the statistics of crimes and offences committed on the Ukrainian – Hungarian border with the national average indicates that the rate of crimes on this border is high. Law enforcement bodies should therefore pay special attention to this area.

This segment of the border is primarily characterized by the activities of well-organized gangs specialized in smuggling illegal Chinese, Vietnamese and Afghan migrants to Hungary. The smugglers of people are usually Ukrainian and Hungarian citizens, whereas those producing forged documents for the migrants are often the same nationality and citizenship as the migrants themselves.

It is also to be noted that the places where the migrants came from were initially the remote republics of the Soviet Union and other Asian countries even farther east and south-east. They were determined, and prepared cautiously for the journey. They often avoided all settlements in their path, and crossed icy rivers in wintertime. After the dissolution of the USSR, the citizens of a number of Asian countries have attempted to cross the border illegally.

According to statistical data from the Ukraine, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union the number of illegal migrants suddenly increased. 600 people were captured in the first four months of 1992. Most of them came from the former Asian republics of the USSR, and they refused to return to their homelands. They wanted to cross the Ukraine and Hungary so as to reach the western half of Europe.

It is also important to know what nationality are the people who wish to cross the border illegally. The following table shows the breakdown of the illegal migrants according to their respective nationalities.

The Countries of Origin of the Illegal Migrants (1990-2000)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Afghanistan	3	44	35	2	60	50	145	359	743	1462	1268
Algeria	2	2	6	12	71	25	53	242	241	91	29
Bangladesh	48	618	382	155	114	10	1	3	622	498	794
Bulgaria	154	343	268	182	152	100	146	171	121	66	38
Bosnia			148	311	224	536	102	51	46	88	105
Egypt	15	102	128	23	15	81	294	95	43	52	20
Croatia			41	68	45	40	18	11	12	12	15
Iraq	14	108	68	46	80	163	322	368	497	315	498
Yugoslavia	72	557	825	1804	2168	3876	2544	2286	6981	3254	773
China	37	415	172	130	14	27	47	281	453	687	1121
Liberia	4	150	78	28	61	60	342	253	11	0	
Ethnic Hungarian from the neighbouring countries	343	273	146	121	90	95	49	74	85	43	59
Macedonia			21	50	109	221	191	129	189	170	117
Moldavia			13	14	26	34	57	96	190	488	1642
Romania	10108	8273	13128	10510	8189	4480	4524	6303	5908	6356	7540
Sierra Leone		1		0	0	3	3	64	255	90	111
Sri Lanka	44	174	485	34	17	85	15	62	121	130	205
Turkey	1461	2865	2301	660	763	1233	963	513	373	270	382
Ukraine			89	70	64	65	45	111	134	73	139

Naturally, in 1990-1991 the Soviet Union still existed, and Ukrainian nationality as such was not mentioned in the official statistics. The Ukraine has therefore been included in the Hungarian statistics since 1992. It is seen in the table that the proportion of illegal Ukrainian migrants is insignificant. The reason is probably that Ukrainian citizens did not need a visa to enter Hungary. Similarly, Hungarian citizens travel to the Ukraine without a visa. As a complementation of this table, I also examined the nationality of the offenders on the border:

**The Countries of Origin of Offenders on the Borders of Hungary
(1990-2000)**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Afghanistan	3	44	35	4	64	73	148	363	750	1468	1358
Algeria	2	2	10	16	76	30	64	264	252	104	42
Bangladesh	49	618	382	155	122	14	2	5	632	570	871
Bulgaria	155	376	499	534	531	391	309	374	307	235	163
Bosnia			171	374	311	674	140	88	140	264	258
Egypt	15	102	130	33	17	106	345	79	63	78	24
Croatia			56	121	110	116	84	70	530	370	99
Iraq	16	108	102	81	105	255	385	400	541	354	556
Yugoslavia	83	649	1465	4270	3925	5362	3690	3379	9699	4674	1445
China	44	431	218	164	53	135	94	322	545	761	1264
Liberia	4	150	83	40	66	60	364	284	20	2	
Ethnic Hungarians from the neighbouring countries	417	412	389	649	746	886	1235	1476	2802	3915	3359
Macedonia			24	67	143	292	283	244	316	307	234
Moldavia			18	22	58	58	95	111	242	603	1967
Romania	10165	8533	14064	15898	13534	8405	6954	8447	8743	10313	10996
Sierra Leone		1		0	1	3	4	65	272	123	123
Sri Lanka	44	174	486	40	17	86	20	62	121	132	228
Turkey	1466	2945	2821	1279	1146	1965	1338	682	947	971	870
Ukraine			167	1161	982	1249	1281	1596	2420	1456	819

Apart from the early 1990, there is an increase in all types of offence. It is only possible to fight this tendency with effective cooperation between the Hungarian and Ukrainian border guards and police forces. The offences committed by Ukrainian citizens involved in illegal or semi-legal trade, caused by the economic crisis in the Ukraine constitute a majority.

The data in the two table above are different from what we find on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border, as these two tables contain the data of all the borders of Hungary.

Traffic and Transport Across the Ukrainian-Hungarian Border in the 1990s

Significant changes are observed in the traffic and transport across the Hungarian – Ukrainian border in the period concerned. In the periods preceeding the 1990s, it was in 1989 that both person and vehicle traffic was the highest. In the following two years a marked decline took place in both categories. The reason for the decline was the the Soviets abolished the simplified procedure of crossing the border. In 1992 a slight increase followed in the traffic of persons, and in 1993 it suddenly doubled. The tendency of increase reached its peak in 1995, and after that year a gradual and significant decrease followed.

Traffic and Transport Across the Ukrainian-Hungarian Border 1990-2000¹⁹

Year	persons	railway	mc ²⁰	cc ²¹	tr ²²	mcy ²³	air	water	All vehicles
1990	6 005 187	860594	1109559	29522	71140	15877	0	0	2 086 692
1991	3 061 757	623104	670057	21570	67590	3506	0	0	1 385 827
1992	4 092 769	497331	1533013	27940	69341	6803	0	0	2 134 428
1993	9 475 338	321109	3538513	37104	96743	8550	88	181	4 002 288
1994	12 025 763	289744	4386631	36924	107214	8610	0	221	4 829 344
1995	15 265 456	239784	5283556	36232	133817	7292	0	320	5 701 001
1996	14 000 083	230837	4665750	28925	127535	2413	0	324	5 055 784
1997	8 130 131	204413	3325307	17367	119209	1052	0	0	3 667 348
1998	5 626 228	190500	2667942	11683	116098	835	0	0	2 987 058
1999	4 498 544	210023	2133644	7958	69363	1884	0	177	2 423 049
2000	5846142	236336	2628238	7511	88724	1455	71	53	2962388

¹⁹ From: Nyírbátor District of Border Guard

²⁰ mc= car

²¹ cc= coach

²² tr= trucks

²³ mcy= motorcycle

Comparing the statistics of the Ukrainian – Hungarian border with those of the all the border of Hungary in the same period, we find the following:

Year	Share of persons (%)	Share of vehicles (%)
1990	5,35	6,65
1991	2,98	4,82
1992	4,26	7,74
1993	8,38	12,07
1994	10,44	13,07
1995	13,56	15,53
1996	12,62	14,41
1997	5,04	10,67
1998	5,69	9,19
1999	5,31	8,22
2000	6,65	9,43

The comparison with the national figures well illustrates the importance of the Ukrainian border in the international traffic and transport across Hungary's frontiers. The peak period from 1994 to 1996 is well illustrated by the data, and it is also to be noted that the proportion of vehicles is continually high, which indicates the importance of the Hungarian – Ukrainian and Hungarian – Russian business links.

A period of stagnation set in in the second half of the 1990s, and the decline in the number of vehicles crossing the border is explained by the crisis of the Russian economy in that period.

In order to learn about the customs of crossing the border here, and to provide an even more accurate picture of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border I find it necessary to include here the traffic and transport in a breakdown according to the border stations.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1990 (in a breakdown according to border stations)

Persons	railway	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicles, total	Border station
778846	0	148885	368	2165	2400	0	0	153818	Tiszabecs
587857	0	101606	1392	350	3969	0	0	107317	Beregsurány
556590	0	143654	1128	0	1411	0	0	146193	Barabás
299350	0	87314	57	0	2563	0	0	89934	Lónya
3782544	860594	628100	26577	68625	5534	0	0	1589430	Záhony

This table indicates that the role of Záhony is extremely important in the cross-border traffic and transport between Hungary and the Ukraine. Although a segment of this border falls on a river, touring on that part of the Tisza was not yet a significant pastime in the early 1990.

Tiszabecs also shows a vivid cross-border traffic, which was probably due to the high number of people using the simplified border crossing scheme.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1991
(in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicles, total	Border station
187616	0	53106	369	70	90	0	0		Tiszabecs
16153	0	7252	269	233	0	0	0	7754	Beregsurány
132126	0	52688	3	3	191	0	0	52885	Barabás
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Lónya
2725862	623104	557011	20929	67284	3225	0	0	1271553	Záhony

In 1991 Lónya was out of work, but it did not influence the statistics of cross-border traffic very much. It caused some dissatisfaction among local people, however. At that period it often happened that trucks had to wait more than 24 hours to cross the border. 5-7,000 people crossed the border by road and 2-3,000 crossed it by rail. The Rubel was exchanged at very low rates (especially in Poland) and people bought electronic gadgets, e. g. handtools, that they brought to Hungary to sell. They then purchased VCRs that they took home and sold with a excellent profit. Double cassette radios and textile products thus exported found a similarly good market in the Soviet Union.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1992
(in a breakdown according to border stations)

Persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
742363	0	325011	7	0	1918	0	0	326936	Tiszabecs
229467	0	94784	427	2622	0	0	0	97833	Beregsurány
584882	0	293678	1065	2560	2884	0	0	300187	Barabás
110531	0	73770	0	0	648	0	0	74418	Lónya
2425526	497331	745770	26441	64159	1353	0	0	1335054	Záhony

The changes that took place in the Soviet Union in 1992 affected the work of the Nyírbátor District of Border Guard as well. The withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary levied a

heavy burden on the Záhony border station. The media reported about cases of smuggling military technology from one country to the other. The appearance of red mercury was especially dangerous.

Lónya was opened again that year, but the traffic through that border station amounted to but a fragment of the total cross-border traffic. Political and economic changes going on in the neighbouring countries were not yet reflected by traffic by air and on the border rivers.

The adverse effects caused by the difficulties between the two countries in terms of settling bills and debts influenced the traffic across the border, especially the transportation of goods.

The container shops formerly set up at Záhony had a little turnover, so they were finally removed from the area.

A positive outcome of the year was that professional cooperation between the border guards of the two sides became more open and effective.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1993 (in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
1095524	0	432575	1	0	1992	0	181	434749	Tiszabecs
881070	0	290167	4527	5709	1669	0	0	302072	Beregsurány
676993	0	246854	1473	105	1853	0	0	250285	Barabás
580361	0	274810	0	0	676	0	0	275486	Lónya
6241390	321109	2294107	31103	90929	2360	88	0	2739696	Záhony

1993 was the first year when air traffic appeared because, as a result of economic changes more and more people had a business airplane in Hungary and the Ukraine. Notices in Ukrainian were placed at the Hungarian border stations.

At Záhony the situation remained unchanged, or became even worse, as trucks had to wait more than 48 hours sometimes.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1994 (in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
1569893	0	546155	0	0	89	0	221	546465	Tiszabecs
1060694	0	387684	2139	2772	684	0	0	393278	Beregsurány
743868	0	303814	761	6	1754	0	0	306335	Barabás
610711	0	401927	2	0	477	0	0	402406	Lónya
8040597	289744	2747052	34022	104436	5606	0	0	3180860	Záhony

The year 1994 brought an exceptionally intensive cross-border traffic, even if we consider the steady increase during the previous years. The reason for this was probably the further worsening economic situation in the Ukraine. The bad economic situation was also experienced in the work of the border stations – there was, for instance power failure at Lushanka (on the opposite side of Beregsurány) several times.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1995
(in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
2522517	0	980462	0	0	1168	0	320	981950	Tiszabecs
1243304	0	476555	2126	1266	347	0	0	480294	Beregsurány
784726	0	359697	513	7	718	0	0	360935	Barabás
684359	0	545995	0	0	22	0	0	546017	Lónya
10030550	239784	2920847	33593	132544	5037	0	0	3331805	Záhony

The high figures of the previous year continued to rise. The fact that there was no inter-bank agreement between Hungary and the Ukraine regulating the exchange rates of the currencies, urged the Ukrainian population to obtain consumer goods from Hungary in exchange of technical gadgets and fuel. For example, spare parts for Soviet machines formerly purchased by people in Hungary were imported from the Ukraine by private individuals who exchanged these articles for various goods they needed at home.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1996
(in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
1279193	0	503161	6	0	963	0	324	504454	Tiszabecs
1307937	0	543865	2401	1737	210	0	0	548213	Beregsurány
692949	0	296634	165	34	677	0	0	297510	Barabás
347223	0	306737	0	0	0	0	0	306737	Lónya
10372781	230837	3015353	26353	125764	536	0	0	3398870	Záhony

The peak of cross-border traffic during the 1990s came in 1996, when 14,000,083 persons and 5,701,001 vehicles crossed the border. The 30% increase of legal traffic came hand in hand with an increase in the illegal traffic through the "green border." It was the time when Ukrainian and Russian citizens purchased Lada cars formerly imported to Hungary

from the USSR and took the vehicles home. It was the time of "Z" tourism, as the temporary licence plates of these cars had a Z as the first character and also the time of "fuel tourism," as people went to the Ukraine to fill up their tanks with cheaper fuel and Ukrainians smuggled Diesel oil to Hungary.

Large-scale car theft appeared in the second half of the 1990s. Cars were stolen to order or for sale in the Ukraine or Russia. One of the negative side-effect of this phenomenon was corruption. Fighting corruption has been one of the priorities of the law enforcement bodies on both sides.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1997

(in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
1161071	0	459196	4	0	20	0	0	459220	Tiszabecs
1853850	0	808875	1099	691	370	0	0	811035	Beregsurány
558340	0	311412	28	8	316	0	0	311764	Barabás
341645	0	317258	0	0	8	0	0	317266	Lónya
4215225	204413	1428566	16236	118510	338	0	0	1768063	Záhony

Although there was a tangible reduction in the volume of the overall traffic, it was still very intensive. One of the reasons for the reducing number of vehicles crossing the border was probably the shortage of fuel in the Ukraine. Záhony and other border stations were used by Ukrainian people and Hungarians who had the necessary documents for the simplified procedure. The most popular articles smuggled across the border into Hungary were alcoholic beverages, tobacco and technical items.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1998

(in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor-cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
1063258	0	476396	40	749	1	0	0	477186	Tiszabecs
1811839	0	830294	606	1715	205	0	0	832820	Beregsurány
501761	0	352896	2	0	234	0	0	353132	Barabás
320467	0	289440	0	0	0	0	0	289440	Lónya
1928903	190500	718916	11035	113634	395	0	0	1034480	Záhony

In November this year a new building was opened at the Tiszabecs border station, where the equipment was also modernized. The majority of the travellers are Ukrainians at this border station – the citizens of third countries do not constitute more than 1-3% of the total number annually.

The reduction of the volume of cross-border traffic that had begun in the previous year continued this year, too. It was probably because stricter customs regulations in the Ukraine. Very significant was the decline at Záhony. The number of people dropped by 50%, that of the vehicles was 60% lower. The truck terminal was opened at Záhony this year, liberating the border station from the suffocating siege of the trucks.

The lasting tendency of reducing cross-border traffic on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border indicates that the bulk of traffic shifted to the segments of the Ukrainian borders that are north of Hungary.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 1999
(in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor -cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
1053539	0	582223	13	56	83	0	177	582552	Tiszabecs
1158230	0	513725	720	597	382	0	0	515424	Beregsurány
373269	0	255404	4	0	148	0	0	255556	Barabás
203762	0	152317	0	0	0	0	0	152317	Lónya
1709744	210023	629975	7221	68710	1271	0	0	917200	Záhony

Since 1999, the issue of Hungary's accession to the EU (Schengen Agreement) has become increasingly important. It makes it inevitable to introduce far-reaching changes on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border as well, because this border is going to be the external border of the Schengen community. Cross-border traffic continued to reduce, partly because of economic changes in the Ukraine and in Hungary and partly because of the changing customs regulations. In parallel with the reduction of legal traffic, illegal traffic across the "green border" intensified. An increasing number of large groups were taken into custody. Attempts to bribe border guards and customs officers also increased in number.

In 1999 the number of trucks waiting to cross the border dropped markedly. It was caused by the crisis in Russia, and it shows that the Ukraine is an important transit country for Russia and other member states of the Community of Independent States. It appears to be convincing evidence that shows that the cross-border traffic on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border is heavily influenced by the Hungarian – Russian and Hungarian – CIS economic relations.

Cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine in 2000
(in a breakdown according to border stations)

persons	rail	car	coach	truck	motor -cycle	air	boat	Vehicle, total	Border station
1676830	0	851341	15	2	24	0	53	851435	Tiszabecs
1386243	0	606989	291	214	471	0	0	607965	Beregsurány
481147	0	306845	0	0	66	0	0	306911	Barabás
276347	0	197076	0	0	0	0	0	197076	Lónya
2025575	236336	665987	7205	88508	894	71	0	2962388	Záhony

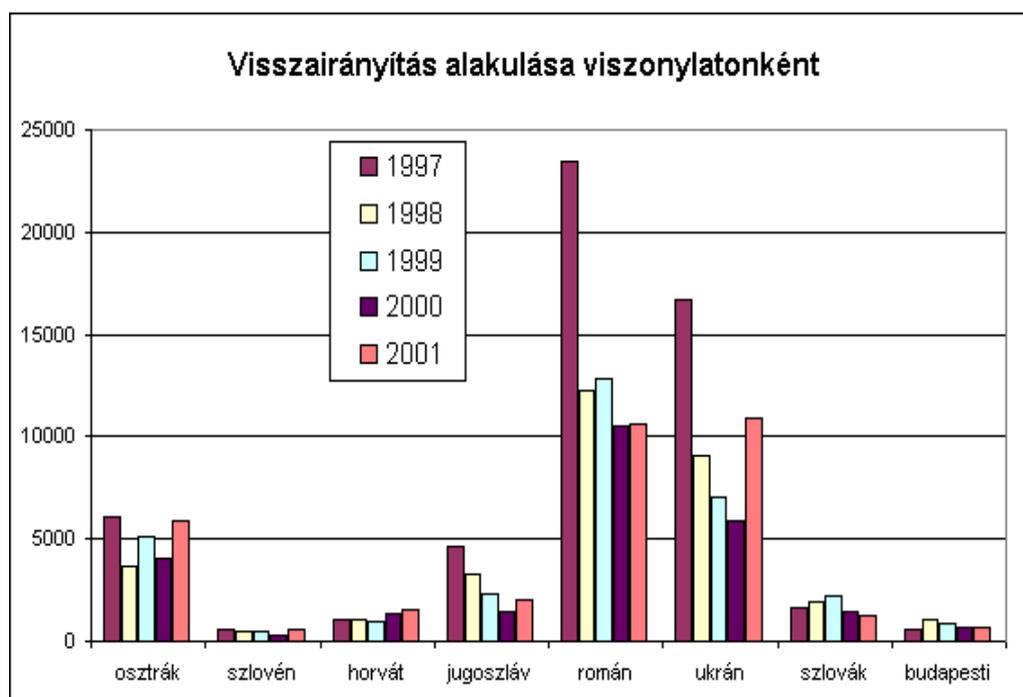
In 2000 a slight increase was observed over the data of the previous year. The number of offences reduced. The aggressivity of the smugglers of people, however, increased, and so did the number of people apprehended at the "green border."



Visszairányítás összesen: The total number of expulsions

In addition to monitoring the cross-border traffic, it is also necessary to take into consideration the number of people who had to leave the country after being taken into custody after crossing the border illegally. Similarly to the number of offences, the number of expulsions²⁴ was the highest in 1994-95.

²⁴ From: Manuscript PhD thesis of György Rilecz. Courtesy of the author.



Visszairányítás viszonylatonként: Expulsions according to directions

Osztrák: Austrian, szlovén: Slovenian, horvát: Croatian, jugoszláv: Yugoslavian, román: Romanian, ukrán: Ukrainian, szlovák: Slovakian, budapesti: in Budapest

When analysing the statistics of expulsions, it is easy to see that the highest number of people were sent back to the Ukraine. One of the most important reasons was that these people did not have sufficient funds to pay for their trip back.

The statistical data from 1990-2000 show that in the first two-thirds of the 1990s Záhony and its area was the gateway between east and west. Later the bulk of the cross-border traffic shifted to the north. Road and railroad have been the absolutely dominant ways of travelling at all times on the Hungarian – Ukrainian border, and also on the other segments of the Hungarian state borders.

The length of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border is almost 137 km, second shortest after the Hungarian – Slovenian border. There are five border stations in this segment at present, which is satisfactory. There is one border station for every 27,4 km, although 62% of the total length of the border falls on Tisza River and its tributaries. For a long time Záhony was the only border station, but in 1989 four new stations opened: Lónya, Barabás, Beregsurány and Tiszabecs. These were open to road traffic and only for people who were in possession of the documents required for the simplified procedure of crossing the border. Beregsurány and Tiszabecs are now open for international traffic. Záhony continues to be the largest border station, and the only one where the railroad crosses the border. The documents required for crossing the border include *passport*, the "small passport" or border crossing permit, offering simplified procedure to people living in the border zone. In Hungary it was introduced in 1989. Another is the *special border crossing permit*, used by railroad personnel, engineers and ticket collectors ect., and pilots. Today Hungarian citizens travelling to the Ukraine are supposed to have a letter of invitation or a certificate to show that they are on an official trip. Ukrainian citizens travelling to Hungary need no such documents.

The reasons for the fluctuation of cross-border traffic during the 1990s are varied. It is to be noted that before 1989 the majority of the very high number of passengers crossing the border (over 1 million in 1989!) were transit travellers, who were on their way to Yugoslavia, which was a popular target country of Soviet tourists at that time, and similarly high was the number of Polish citizens involved in illegal or semi-legal trade. At that time it was possible to exchange Russian currency officially and legally. A decline followed the peak of 1989. The decline continued until 1991: special privileges for people living in the border zone on the other side were abolished, and transit travellers almost completely disappeared.

The border stations serving the people living in the border zone did not function at all in 1991. Lónya was completely closed down, and Beregsurány was only open to the builders of the hospital at Beregszász (Ukr. Beregovo).

After 1990 a new period of prosperity followed: at the peak in 1995 more 15 million people crossed the Hungarian – Ukrainian border. This was the time of "Z-tourism," when used Soviet-made automobiles were allowed to be taken into the Ukraine duty-free between 1993 and 1995. The cars to be exported received a licence plate with Z as its first character in Hungary. It was also possible to receive a VAT-refund after the cars taken out of Hungary. Since the new customs regulations were introduced in the Ukraine – high tariffs on food and consumer goods – the traffic has diminished steadily.

When the means of transport are analysed, two tendencies can be observed. After 1988, when railroad had been dominant with its share of 76%, the quantity of goods transported by rail gradually diminished, as the eastern markets ceased to be profitable for Hungarian companies. The number of cars and trucks had increased before 1995, and although their absolute number has dropped slightly since that time, they are still the most important means of transport. In addition to the traditional ways of travelling (cars, trucks, coaches, motorcycles and railways) airplanes and boats also appeared. At Tiszabecs it is possible to cross the river at preliminary request (river tours), and the occasional flights between Ungvár (Ukr. Uzhorod) and Nyíregyháza are to be noted.

In the opinion of the commanders of the border stations, there are certain *regularities* in the fluctuation of the intensity of the cross-border traffic. There is a regular fluctuation even within the period of one day at Záhony: incoming traffic is less intensive in the evening and at night, whereas the intensity of outgoing traffic is lower early in the morning and late at night. At the other border stations, as 85-95% of the passengers are regular travellers from the neighbourhood, no such daily regularities can be observed. There is also a regular *weekly fluctuation* in the intensity of traffic. It corresponds to the market days in the towns of the border zone, and more recently, to the regular Saturday coach services to the new hypermarkets of Nyíregyháza (Tesco, Metro). It is especially characteristic of the traffic at Záhony. There used to be a clear drop in the intensity of traffic on Sunday, but today it appears to vanish. This is most likely the result of the further deterioration of the living standards in the Transcarpathian region of the Ukraine, and the recently introduced Slovakian visa to the Ukrainian citizens. Traders formerly going to Slovakia on a regular basis now come to Hungary. The number of ethnic Hungarian students from Transcarpathia who study in Hungary is high, and Friday afternoon they head for home, and Sunday afternoon they return. A not very significant monthly fluctuation is also present, as Ukrainian citizens working illegally in the construction trade in Hungary have to return home once a month, as they are not allowed to stay longer than 30 days without a residence permit. The intensity of pedestrian traffic, naturally, depends largely on the weather and the seasons. Various cultural and religious events – the pilgrimage at Máriapócs, the Flower Carnival in Debrecen, the visit of the Pope in 1991 – produce occasional peaks in the numbers of people crossing the border.

The composition of the passengers is also interesting. The distribution of the Hungarian and Ukrainian citizens is 30-70% respectively. At Barabás and Lónya only local people are allowed to cross the border with their border permit. At Beregsurány standard passport is also used, and the distribution of permit and passport holders is 40-60% respectively, but approximately 80% of the bearers of standard passports also come from the direct neighbourhood. At Záhony 90% of all the Ukrainian passengers come from the Transcarpathian region, and the vast majority of the Hungarians travelling to the Ukraine also come from the border zone.

The Ukrainian authorities *make crossing the border difficult with a number of things*. A form is to be made out that the car belongs to the person who is actually driving it across the border. A letter of invitation is needed for the Hungarian citizens, or a business invitation, or a document certifying that accommodation has been reserved, and car insurance etc. In addition to that, they demand various fees to be paid, and these change virtually from month to month. Sometimes the foreigners are supposed to contribute to the road construction expenses of the Ukraine, sometimes they must pay environment protection fee or personal insurance for the duration of their stay. Artificial delay is a natural part of crossing the border at each of the Ukrainian border stations. It means that there is a police station a few hundred yards before the actual border station. Vehicles are halted at the station, and only when they pay some extra fee – usually HuF 700-1,000 – are they allowed to continue on their way.

The Hungarian Border Guard are in daily working contact with their Ukrainian colleagues. The officers on duty have one or two discussions a day with their Ukrainian counterparts, and if necessary, they meet or talk over the phone even more often. The heads off the regional Border Guard headquarters meet every half a year. The system of *border commissioners* functions between Hungary and the Ukraine.²⁵ A commissioner on each side – in Hungary appointed by the Ministry of the Interior – meet every half a year, according to their regular schedule, but in the case of a serious offence, or if a border station is congested, they meet to discuss the problem. If the border commissioners are unable to come to an agreement – e. g. fire spread from the territory of one country to the other, or there is a disputed case of expulsion – experts have meetings in several turns if necessary. If it is also futile, diplomacy has the last word.

²⁵The Bureau of the Border Commissioner is an institution that is able and authorized to discuss various current issues with similar organizations in the partner country, ensures that treaties and agreements are honoured, and reveals the Foreign Office of various minor tasks and obligations. The authorizations and commitments of the border commissioners are laid down in the international agreements on the management and administration of the border concerned.

Tourism

Hungarians²⁶ travelling to the Ukraine²⁷

Year	Passangers (x 1,000)
1990	139
1991	234
1992	257
1993	561
1994	417
1995	379
1996	463
1997	252
1998	185
1999	149
2000	379

The data above are self-explanatory. The Hungarian citizens with their new passports they received in the 1980s travelled to west or to the Mediterranean seashores. Formerly there were only package tours, or an invitation letter was needed, and when these things were finally abolished, people chose the more fashionable touristic attractions. In the second half of the 1990s economic difficulties in the Ukraine deterred travellers.

Travellers from the Ukraine to Hungary²⁸

Évek	Utasok száma (ezer fő)
1990	1 312
1991	1 040
1992	986
1993	2 611
1994	3 670
1995	4 706
1996	4 778
1997	2 211
1998	1 232
1999	950
2000	2 419

²⁶ Soviet Union 1990-1992

²⁷ From Statistical Yearbook 2000 Budapest, p. 27

²⁸ **Forrás:** Statistical Yearbook 2000. Bp. 27. p

The situation is entirely different when viewed from the direction of the Ukraine. After the bleak years of socialism, Ukrainian citizens were fond of travelling to Hungary, where a consumer society of much higher standards awaited them, and through Hungary to other countries. It is well reflected by the statistics.

Crime Fighting, and its International Aspects in General

As there are no data available from the Ukrainian – Hungarian border, I am only able to provide a general analysis. In spite of the good cooperation between the Hungarian and Ukrainian police forces, I have not been able to find any special literature on the topic. Since the 1990, more than ten million foreigners have crossed Hungary's border a year. Naturally, many of them came through the Ukrainian segment of the Hungarian frontier, as shown in the previous sections. It is natural, that the more or less "homogeneous" structure of crime in Hungary has gradually become more colourful, as international crime found its way to Hungary.

In spite of the fact the crime committed by foreigners causes a serious concern in the country, and the media seem to pay special attention to these cases, Hungarian crime rate is primarily determined by Hungarian criminals. All statistics indicate that the crime rate has been significantly and steadily increasing since 1989. The wave of crime shocked the country, and the situation was worsened by the fact that as a result of the change of the political system the formerly solid structure of the police forces was also undermined. Approximately one third of the police personnel has been replaced. In spite of all these difficulties, by today the police force has become a lot more effective than ever before, thanks to its new training system and principles, advanced equipment, extensive system of foreign relations and a number of other factors.

Qualitative changes have also taken place in crime as well, which may be summed up as follows:

- criminals from the former socialist countries appeared,
- barriers that formerly hampered the free movement of criminals have been removed,
- international relations between criminals have been built up, crime organized on the basis of clan- or ethnic identity appeared,
- new means and methods of crime spread more rapidly than ever before,
- serious actions of criminals – especially against significant property – are managed and controlled from abroad,
- stolen goods are sold abroad,
- money from crime is invested or spent in other countries.

The Most Important Fields of Crime where Foreign Influence is Clearly Observable are the Following:

Crimes in connection with **cars** is a special area. In addition to a number of Hungarian criminals, many Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Yugoslav criminals claim their share in this field. As a result of sophisticated methods of stealing valuable cars, the international network of smuggling automobiles has come into being. They are able to deliver a car to the customer through several countries in a mere few hours. The car is then legalized and sold especially in the former socialist countries and the Middle Eastern states.

The qualitative changes may be seen in the **crime against life** as well. The number of cases of homicide has increased dramatically. Internationalization is indicated by the showdowns between gangs of different nationalities and the cases of assassination. The assassins are often Ukrainians.

It often happens that both the victim and the murderer are foreign citizens, and investigation leads to another country, but not necessarily to the home country of either the victim or the killer. Information related to the murder is almost never found in one single country. The world of Russian-speaking criminals consists of **two levels built upon each other**.

The upper level is constituted by criminals who are now wealthy and have extensive business and political connections, but who started their careers as common criminals. They are primarily involved in the so-called white-collar crime, but they also acquire legal or legalized enterprises, often abroad.

The clan-type groups, organized on the basis of ethnic identity, are below the top level. They organize prostitution, gambling, blackmail, showdowns and assassinations, and attacks on tourists coming from the former Soviet member states. They try to integrate themselves in the night catering trade, and are involved in perpetual struggle for the redistribution of the market.

Economic crime has undergone major changes during the past few years, mostly because changes have also taken place in legislation and the world of business has also been entirely transformed.

Offences in connection with foreign currency and customs have diminished in number, whereas coinage offences have become more common.

A grave problem of the whole country, and the whole world, is **narcotics**. Since 1990, an increasing number of Hungarian citizens have been involved in drug trafficking. Hungary, as a result of its geographical location, has become a major transit route of drugs smuggled from South-West Asia to Western Europe. Drug trafficking is a relatively minor problem at the Hungarian – Ukrainian border today, it is possible that the situation becomes worse in the future.

The Problem of Refugees on the Hungarian – Ukrainian Border in the 1990s²⁹

The problems of refugees, entirely unknown in the years of socialism, struck Hungary³⁰ and the Ukraine all of a sudden at the time of the change of the political system. Today Hungary has notable experience in both emigration and immigration issues. Political events, economic collapse forced hundreds of thousands of Hungarian people to leave their homeland during our stormy history. At the same time, the traditional Hungarian hospitality dictated that Hungary welcomed Poles, French, Greek and a number of other refugees during the past centuries.

Between World War II and 1987 Hungary was, similarly to other socialist countries, a source state of migrants. The acceptance of refugees occasionally was a purely political issue, without legal and institutional background.

The increasing number of refugees – first especially ethnic Hungarians from Romania – had initiated the process as a result of which Hungary became a target country of migrants by the early 1990s.

²⁹ From: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Ministry of the Interior, Budapest, 03 30 2002

³⁰ During the period of the dualistic monarchy and during World War II, Hungary acquired valuable experience in both emigration and immigration issues, and had an elaborate system of laws and regulations related to these questions. After WWII, in the years of socialism, the issue was treated as taboo, and it was not even allowed to talk about it. Emigrants in those days were referred to as *dissidents*, and it was not desirable to talk about them.

The political leadership, first under the pressure of opposition forces and the churches, later because of the hostile attitude of the Romanian political leadership, and finally by its own will and commitment, showed more and more readiness to offer help to the ethnic Hungarians coming from Transylvania, and later to the refugees arriving from the former GDR.

The first legal regulations related to the issue of refugees was the **Settlement Fund**, created by the government with the authorization of the parliament in the spring of 1988. The Fund concentrated the resources allocated by the government to assist the refugees coming to the country.

It was soon recognized, that the question of refugees was not restricted to ethnic Hungarians, and Hungary decided to join the Geneva Convention on Refugees, signed in 1951, and the New York Agreement, amending the Geneva Convention in 1967. At the time of Hungary's joining the Convention there were 30,000 refugees in Hungary, mostly ethnic Hungarians from Romania.

The Major Stages of Creating the Office of Refugees³¹

After 1989 the basic laws and other regulations related to the issue of refugees were created in Hungary, and the basic elements of the institutional background were also organized. The Office of Refugees came into being as one of the head departments of the Ministry of the Interior. This office was the supervising and guiding authority over local bodies that got into direct contact with the refugees, and the five local branches of the office. By appointment of the Minister for the Interior, the office handled the **Fund for Refugees** (formerly Settlement Fund). The office was also responsible for evaluating and maintaining the three camps receiving refugees. The office continues to play a decisive role in coordinating the related activities of the various government departments and authorities. They also maintain connections with NGOs involved in work with refugees, and assist the foreigners asking for a refugee status in finding their place in society. They also represent Hungary in international organizations responsible for refugees, primarily the UN High Commission for Refugees, the International Migration Organization, the Council of Europe, and the Central European Initiative.

The government with its Decree No. 43/1993 (III.3). established the Office of Refugees and Migrants. The head of the office was an under-secretary of state, appointed by the Minister for the Interior. The operative work is performed by the director. In the autumn of 1994 the under-secretary was no longer the head of the office, as it was re-integrated into the Ministry of the Interior. After the first wave of immigrants, who came from Transylvania, a number of immigrants arrived from different countries. After 1991, the proportion of ethnic Hungarians dropped from 96% to 65%, which was a significant reduction, though the share of Hungarians was still the highest. The Hungarian government at that time regarded the ethnic Hungarians as people who "moved home" from their native land, and it was even reflected in the name of the Settlement Fund. They were assisted financially in settling down in Hungary. International aid was also used in this process.

1991 offered brand new experience to the experts working with immigration. Tens of thousands of people fled Yugoslavia and sought refuge in Hungary and other countries. The first people arrived from Croatia then, in the summer of 1992, they started to arrive from Bosnia and finally from little Yugoslavia. These people did not refer to the 1951 Geneva Convention, and did not say that they were personally persecuted in their homeland. They fled from the civil war, later from the war, trying to save their lives. Victims of forced migration

³¹ Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Ministry of the Interior, Budapest, 03 30 2002

and ethnic cleansing also came in high numbers. They were received on a humanitarian basis, although only a few hundred of them applied for refugee status. What they needed was temporary refuge, as they almost all intended to return to their original homes.

In spite of all its special and peculiar characteristics, this wave of immigrants was the first to illustrate the whole process for which the Geneva Convention was created. It means that the refugees belonged to different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and they also had different ideas about their future.

The number of refugees arriving and applying for a refugee status has gradually diminished since 1993. The problems and concerns of the Office of Refugees did not diminish accordingly, as the crisis in the Balkans is not yet over, and it is not easy to find long lasting solutions. Before 1992 the main concern for the office providing for the direct and basic means of helping the refugees – accommodation, blankets, supplies etc. – after 1992 the aspects of quality work and long-term planning were foregrounded.

From the Law on Refugees to the Present Day³²

While Hungary was facing the repeated waves of immigrants after 1988, first from Transylvania, then from a number of other places, the shortcomings in the legislation and institutional background of dealing with the problem of immigration became more and more apparent. The most important tasks of the Office of Refugees after 1993 was therefore the elimination of the shortcomings, and making the system suitable for long-term and reliable operation. After gathering and analysing information about the legislation related to refugees and migrants from the member states of the EU, work on developing a new and suitable law on refugees began. Before that, the only law that regulated the attitude of the Hungarian government to refugees was the Constitution. According to Entry 1 of § 65 of the Constitution, the Republic of Hungary offers refuge to people who are, in their homelands, exposed to harassment or persecution for ethnic, political or religious reasons.

The new law wished to fill the gap in the Hungarian legal system by summarizing the practices of other countries, the experience gathered that far by various Hungarian organizations involved in the work with refugees, and matched all this to the related requirements of the EU.

In 1997 the bill passed the parliament as Act CXXXIX/1997 regulating the procedures of assisting foreign people seeking refuge in Hungary. The law came into force on the 1st of March 1998, when its implementation instructions also came into effect. On the 1st of March the restriction that Hungary was only willing to receive refugees from Europe, was lifted.

By guaranteeing that all people arriving as refugees are entitled to a due and lawful procedure to decide whether person is to receive the status of a refugee or not, Hungary fulfills its obligation to protect human rights and the humanistic traditions of the country. The law also contained a new status, a person was "received" during the procedure of processing his/her application for the status of a refugee. In accordance with §3 of the Treaty of Rome on human rights, the parties to the treaty shall not force anybody to return to his/her home if it is supposed that person shall be subjected to torture or humiliating treatment. Formerly, the agreement of Rome was only represented in the enclosures regarding expulsion of a foreigner of Act LXXXVI/1993 on Immigration and Settlement. It was now modified, stating that anyone can be a "received" person unless there are circumstances explicitly negating this.

³² From: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Ministry of the Interior, Budapest, 03 30 2002

The new laws made it necessary to modify the system of managing refugee issues as well. The Government modified its Decree No. 43/1993 (III.3) on the 1st of April 1998 by adding enclosures that relate to the further development of the Office of Refugees. As per the Government Decree, the office would become a central and independent institution, the head of which is appointed by the Minister for the Interior, and which performs the duties and activities specified by the Minister and other authorities.

When the new law came into effect, the tasks of the office increased in number and complexity. As evaluating the applications for refugee status became a single-stage process, all evaluations had to be done by the office. The number of people seeking refugee status as defined by the Geneva Convention of 1951, increased markedly. It was also a new task of the office to decide who was to be granted the "received" status, and they had to decide about the people who were not going to be granted the refugee status, but who deserved some sort of protection for humanitarian reasons. Furthermore, the office was authorized to decide upon issues of expulsion.

A data base had to be set up about a number of countries, in order to be able to make profound decisions about the cases of people arriving from remote countries. The data base is managed by the office. The system of care provided to the refugees was also altered, as they needed to examine the financial status of the refugees, that is, they wished to find out whether the person was really in need of support and care. Promoting the integration of people coming from countries outside Europe, from an entirely cultural background, has been the task of the office as well. Immigrants often submitted their applications for immigrant status at local authorities, and the office was responsible for analysing the appeals filed against the decisions of the local offices of administration.

One of the most important impacts of the Law on Refugees and Immigration has been that the official procedure of evaluating applications for refugee status was converted into a single-stage process, the decision making power has become more centralized. Fragmented local offices, working under the aegis of the police force, were closed down, and the civilian staff of the office became responsible for the whole process. The law provides for the creation and management of a single and standardized register of refugees. The office shall be obliged to supply data upon request from the data base.

I have found it necessary to include this brief survey here, to provide an insight into the past and present of the Hungarian refugee regulations and institutions. This is the area that has undergone the most dramatic and spectacular changes since the early 1990s, and it has been a burning issue in all the states of the region. The importance of the issue is underlined by the fact that the law enforcement bodies of the region encounter refugees – and the problems clustered around them - as part of their daily routine.

About Refugees in the Face of Statistics³³**MAGYARORSZÁGRA ÉRKEZETT MENEKÜLŐK**

1988 - 2001. év

Év	Regisztrált menekülők száma	Ebből állampolgárság szerint									
		román		szovjet (FÁK)		volt jugoszláv		Európán kívüli		egyéb	
		fő	%	fő	%	fő	%	fő	%	fő	%
1988-2001	172 460	54 991	31,89%	3 500	2,03%	85 769	49,73%	26 336	15,27%	1 864	1,08%
1988	13 173	13 173	100,00%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1989	17 448	17 365	99,52%	50	0,29%	-	-	-	-	33	0,19%
1990	18 283	17 416	95,26%	488	2,67%	-	-	-	-	379	2,07%
1991	63 369	3 728	6,99%	738	1,38%	48 486	90,87%	-	-	408	0,76%
1992	16 204	844	5,21%	241	1,49%	15 021	92,70%	-	-	98	0,60%
1993	6 366	648	10,21%	168	3,13%	4 693	86,59%	-	-	67	1,06%
1994	3 375	661	19,59%	304	9,01%	2 386	70,70%	-	-	24	0,71%
1995	6 912	623	9,86%	316	6,33%	6 046	86,36%	-	-	28	0,47%
1996	1 259	350	27,80%	268	21,29%	559	44,40%	-	-	82	6,51%
1997	2 109	131	6,21%	90	4,27%	329	15,60%	1 411	66,90%	148	7,02%
1998	7 118	124	1,74%	99	1,39%	3 333	46,82%	3 351	47,08%	211	2,96%
1999	11 499	16	0,14%	264	2,30%	5 111	44,45%	6 008	52,25%	100	0,87%
2000	7 801	36	0,46%	304	3,90%	692	8,87%	6 592	84,50%	177	2,27%
2001	9 554	76	0,80%	171	1,79%	214	2,24%	8 974	93,93%	119	1,25%

Forrás: BM Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal

The table shows the refugees coming to Hungary in a breakdown according to their nationality. Regisztrált menekülők száma: Number of registered refugees

Ebből állampolgárság szerint: Breakdown according to their citizenship

Európán kívüli: From outside Europe

Egyéb: other

As a result of the circumstances mentioned previously, a large number of refugees arrived in Hungary in the 1990s. In the table above I made an effort to illustrate the scales and proportions, as they can be easily misleading, due to the constant changes. The Ukrainian refugees are not specified separately, they are listed with the FÁK –Community of Independent States. The outstanding % data of 1996 are not caused by refugees in nominally high numbers, but there were few refugees coming from different other countries as a result of political consolidation in those states.

**MAGYARORSZÁGRA MENEKÜLŐK
ÉRKEZÉSÜK MÓDJA SZERINT**

1988-2001. év

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Legálisan	52,5%	20,6%	81,3%	88,4%	88,3%	98,3%	96,4%	94,1%	96,0%	29,1%	29,2%	57,3%	18,9%	15,0%
Illegálisan	47,5%	79,4%	18,7%	11,6%	11,7%	1,7%	3,6%	5,9%	4,0%	70,9%	70,8%	42,7%	81,1%	85,0%

Forrás: BM Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal

³³ From: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Ministry of the Interior, Budapest, 03 30 2002

In this table the number of refugees is shown according to their methods of arrival, legal or illegal. The figures illustrate the effects of the political changes that have taken place in the countries of the region. At the beginning, legal and illegal refugees came primarily from Romania. Later the refugees of the Yugoslavian civil war sought shelter in our country. The peak in 1997 is explained by the fact that illegal migrants, after their apprehension, immediately applied for refugee status.

MENEKÜLTÜGYI ÜGYFÉLFORGALMI STATISZTIKA (1989 - 2000. évben)

Évek	Összes új érkező	Illegálisan érkezett	Menekült eljárás indult	Menekült státuszt kapott	Befogadott státuszt kapott	Kérelem elutasítva	Eljárás megszüntetve	Menekült státuszt visszavonva	Folyamatban levő ügy
1989	3641	0	36	35	0	1	0	0	-
1990	15309	316	3520	2561	0	318	548	0	41
1991	10267	240	921	434	0	150	223	168	106
1992	5547	117	458	472	0	71	58	277	17
1993	5366	93	468	361	0	45	21	278	42
1994	3375	121	207	239	0	29	13	534	19
1995	5912	351	130	116	0	32	5	220	13
1996	1259	48	152	66	0	42	31	101	18
1997	2109	1496	177	27	0	106	57	280	6
1998	7118	5045	7118	362	232	2790	1174	29	1727
1999	11499	6589	11499	313	1776	3537	5786	10	2020
2000	7801	6324	7801	197	680	2978	4916	11	1131
Összesen	79203	20740	32487	5183	2688	10099	12832	1908	

Forrás: BM Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági

In this table the administrative issues in connection with refugees are summed up.

Összes új érkező: total number of newcomers

Illegálisan érkezett: illegal immigrant

Menekült eljárás indult: procedure for refugee status started

Menekült státuszt kapott: refugee status granted

Befogadott státuszt kapott: "received" status granted

Kérelem elutasítva: application rejected

Folyamatban levő ügy: no. of cases in progress

Fő: no. of persons

The 1990s presented the charity organizations a real challenge. The table above shows a marked difference between the numbers of those who submitted an application for refugee status and that of those who actually received the status. The reasons for that is probably many of the immigrants were trying to escape bad economic conditions, and they were unable to convince the decision makers that they were politically persecuted.

Another interesting feature is that not all the people who submitted an application for refugee status are listed in the column summing up the final result. It is because many of them fled to reach Slovenia, Austria or Slovakia and then the EU legally or illegally the first time they saw a chance.

Hungary is also becoming a target country of legal immigration as well, while remains a transit country of illegal migrants for a long time. It is also likely that there is no short-term solution to the crisis and problems of countries like Afghanistan and other countries, and

migrants continue to leave these areas, many of them using the channels of migration leading through Hungary .

Conclusions

Similarly to other democratic and free countries, Hungary is committed to converting the borders into lines that connect and not separate countries from each other. At the same time it is necessary to maintain the strict and lawful control of the borders. When Hungary joins the EU, we shall control the internal borders liberally and the external ones strictly. It is expected to take place in a few years, and then the Hungarian – Ukrainian border shall be the external border of the Schengen community. In that case, it is to be ensured that all law-abiding citizens of any country should be able to freely cross the border, whereas all offenders, criminals and illegal migrants should be carefully and safely screened and kept out for the safety of the Euro-citizens.

After our accession to the EU we shall follow the norms and standards of Schengen, but it is not expected to trigger adverse reactions from the neighbouring countries. There is, however, hardly any doubt that as a result of a stricter border control the number of people not allowed to enter shall increase, and also a higher number of illegal migrants shall be stopped at the border. It may induce changes in the working methods of the authorities of the neighbouring states.

As a result of the stricter and more careful control of the border, crossing is expected to slow down, at least at the beginning. It is possible to overcome this problem by better organization and the opening of new border stations, and modernizing and enlarging the existing ones.

Both countries are interested in fighting international crime, and the key to the success is effective cooperation between the police forces on the two sides of the border.

The crisis of the Ukrainian economy affects cross-border traffic, and economic aspects prevail – the cheap Ukrainian fuel influences the fuel market of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County as well.

The number of Ukrainians is higher than that of the Hungarians in the cross-border traffic between Hungary and the Ukraine.

Since the early 1990s smugglers of people have organized their activities around illegal migration with increasing efficiency. This field of crime is one of the most profitable, after drug trafficking, arms smuggling and prostitution. The smugglers of people strive to organize their network from the source country to the target country. The organizers seek partners among the citizens of the countries along their routes, so as to ensure transportation, accommodation, rest and hiding. An organization of smugglers of people may be active for several years, changing their routes, methods and partners, even the source countries. They are hungry for profit, and they do their best to lure all the money and valuable from their customers in exchange of their "services." They are even willing to transport somebody to the target country free of charge, then involve the person in their illegal activities (e.g. smuggling women, then forcing them to prostitution).

Closing chapter

It is always dangerous to live near the border. There is always a degree of uncertainty, and it especially applies to the Hungarian – Ukrainian border. This border has changed several times during the 20th century, the people living here gathered experience from several different countries without moving from their home. In the 1990s the circumstances at the border were determined by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the independence of the Ukraine, and the grave economic problems of the young state. The Hungarian side of the border was affected by the change of orientation in the foreign policy – and economy - of the nation, which directly influenced the traffic across the border.

From the aspect of the whole economy of Hungary, the importance of the Hungarian – Ukrainian border is not very high. Záhony, as a gateway to the east, has been able to preserve much of its original significance. The traffic at the new border stations, all opened during the 1990 is intensive, but they do not challenge the dominance of Záhony.

In the present situation both countries wish to join the Euro-Atlantic systems. Hungary is at present a member of the NATO, and is within reach of the accession the EU. The country should therefore meet the Schengen requirements.³⁴ Legal harmonization is underway, and so is the reinforcement of the defence of the external borders. As the Ukraine is not likely to be a member of the EU very soon, visa shall also be introduced between the two countries. The introduction of the visa system shall obviously be reflected by the volume of cross-border traffic between the two countries, resulting a reduction in the number of people travelling from one country to the other.

The network of twinned towns across the border, joint cultural, sports, religious, business programmes and relations are expected to flourish in the future as well.

As the nationality of the border region is homogeneous, connections between Hungarians and Hungarians on the two sides of the border continues to be of utmost importance. The Hungarian ID card, the national Schengen visa, and modern agreement on simplified procedure for border crossing.

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