

Petition to Hungarian representatives, leaders of the mother country and the Hungarian representatives of the European Union.

The basic requirements for the continued retention and growth of the distinctiveness of the Hungarian population of Voivodina.

Beginning with the facts that:

- the demographic, economic and work situation of the Hungarian community of Voivodina – even after the current, allegedly democratic, government's taking power on October 5, 2000 – continued to worsen (the results of the October 2011 census regarding the ethnic composition of the population has still not been made public), childbirths have declined, the departure of the young and educated has increased, leading to an aging population;
- the level of unemployment in Voivodina has reach an unprecedented 27%, significantly higher among the local Hungarians;
- Hungarians continue to be excluded from decision making bodies, e.g.- in Zrenjanin and Novi Sad, which ignores the right to proportional participation of minorities in representation and decision making, but also among entrepreneurs, who lose their lands and assets, which contributes to the growing poverty of the community;
- the Hungarian parties of Voivodina performed poorly in the elections of 2012. There is no common understanding in regard to responding to the fundamental questions of the community;
- taking into consideration the above, disillusionment, depression and lethargy is taking hold of the community.

We, the undersigned leaders of the Voivodina Hungarian parties, civil organizations, as well as private individuals and those present at the conference convened in Novi Sad on September 27, 2012, feeling responsible for our and our children's future, demand the following:

1. Steps must be taken towards the creation of job opportunities, which reduces unemployment, provides an adequate income and livelihood, increases the possibility of family growth, as well as retaining the young and educated in the land of their birth.
2. Serbia must ensure the complete, general autonomy of the Hungarians of Voivodina, an autonomy based on regional and personal self-determination. Based on the experience to date, the laws governing national councils must be urgently revised to ensure the tangible political self-government of ethnic minorities, endowing them with decision making rights, enabling their ability to articulate their interests, and their effective representation. Subsequent to that, the holding of democratic elections of national councils, based on the electoral rolls prepared and maintained by the state, applying an election method which takes into consideration the regional distribution of the population.
3. Actual decentralization of Serbia and realignment into EU-compatible (not statistical) regions. In the redefining of regions, economic, geographic, ethnic and other considerations must be followed. The Hungarians of Voivodina living in a bloc to be in one region, one administrative entity. As a subsidiary part of the public administrative changes, local and

community governments must be created. The complete reinstatement of the Voivodina Autonomous Region, including legislative, executive and judicial rights.

4. The inclusion into the electoral law of the parliamentary seats enshrined in the Serb Constitution; the proportional participation in decision making institutions, public administrative and judicial bodies, as well as interior authorities – at all levels. The passing of a new law regarding the election of representatives, to enable casting of votes for party lists and individuals. Based on the ballots cast, each nominee who garners at least 2,000 votes to be treated in hierarchical ranking.
5. Reversing the decree transferring Ada, Senta and Kanjiža to the Northern Banate Region, in an effort to encourage assimilation, and return them to their natural ethnic, economic and geographic environment in Northern Bačka Region.
6. The reinstatement of local courts of law in Ada, Čoka, Kanjiža, Bečej, Temerin, Bačka Topola and Senta. The data covering the ethnic composition of the members of the courts and prosecutors offices to be made public and ensure the proportional makeup of the provincial and municipal administrative and judicial bodies, public firms and offices, as well as official sanction for the use of Hungarian in these bodies; a new law governing the use of minority languages.
7. The creation of an educational system, from kindergarten to university, based on the values of the Hungarian population and considering the parents' wishes. Hungarian groups introduced at the University of Novi Sad. The elementary schools of Turda and Itebej, currently part of the Serb school board, to be independent. The reorganization of the teaching of Serb as non-mother tongue, the updating of school texts and the expunging of content that stigmatizes ethnic groups.
8. Ensure the freedom of the press and the distribution of independent and factual information from the Hungarian National Council.
9. The announcement of the completion date of the People's Theater in Subotica and the European College in Novi Sad, as there is no current estimate.
10. Expunge the principle of collective guilt from the October 6, 2011 law dealing with the return and indemnity of nationalized assets.
11. The Serb Parliament issue a statement condemning the atrocities carried out against Hungarian of Voivodina in 1944/45, expresses an apology and ensures the victims' right to last rites and deserving memorial. Make it possible to: raise memorials in every village to the victims of World War II, where mass graves lie, open the secret dossiers and archives, aid in the research of the previous events, as well as open the file of the list of secret informers and begin proceedings against the perpetrators of the atrocities who are still alive.
12. Cease the settlement, under government direction, of those deported mostly from Western Europe, to regions populated by ethnic minorities, since that further distorts the ethnic proportion of the population, as well as adversely affecting public safety.
13. The Serb government must finally ensure the effective investigation of ethnic-based incidents and the application of the full weight of laws against the perpetrators, regardless of ethnicity; the release of the youths convicted in Temerin.
14. Take into consideration the original, native Hungarian minority's noted questions and raise them during Serbia's integration discussion to join the EU. In the interest of coming to an equitable solution to the situation of the Voivodina's Hungarian ethnic community, as well as a resolution to the region's – and Europe's – people conflict, we hold it indispensable that the

Serb-Hungarian and Hungarian-Serb relations be resolved previous to Serbia attaining candidate status.

15. We will follow closely the stand taken – at all levels – for the realization of the previous demands and will follow up with the Hungarian representatives.

These points of view, composed in common, were sent to the press, foreign and local, to Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić, to Štefan Füle, Commissioner of the European Commission for Enlargement, to Jelko Kacin, European Parliament Rapporteur on Serbia, to leaders in the mother country and to the Hungarian representatives of the European Union.

Novi Sad, September 27, 2012.

Parties:

- Andras Agoston, president, Vajdasági Magyar Demokrata Párt (Hungarian Democratic Party of Voivodina)
- Aron Csonka, president, Vajdasági Magyarok Demokratikus Közössége (Hungarian Democratic Alliance of Voivodina)
- Balint Laszlo, president, Magyar Remény Mozgalom (Hungarian Hope Movement)
- Laszlo Racz Szabo, president, Magyar Polgári Szövetség (Hungarian Civic Union)

Civil organizations:

- Argus - Vajdasági Magyar Kisebbségjogi Civil Egyesület (Civil Association for Hungarian Minority Rights in Voivodina), Antal Bozoki, president
- Barangoló - Civil Szervezet (Civic Organization), Zenta, Eva Miklos, president
- Horizont - Dél-bácskai és Szerémségi Magyar Civil Szervezetek Szövetsége (Association of Hungarian Civil Organizations of South Bacska and Sylvania), Jozsef Batori, president
- Nagy Sándor Műemlékvédő és Hagyományápoló Egyesület (Sándor Nagy Memorial and Tradition Fostering Society), Ferenc Papp, president
- Újvidéki Diáksegélyező Egyesület (Student Aid Association of Novi Sad), Matuska Marton, elnök
- Újvidéki Magyar Olvasókör (Hungarian Book Circle of Novi Sad), Maria Matuska, president
- Újvidéki Polgári Daloskör (Civil Song Circle of Novi Sad), Ferenc Papp, president
- Vajdasági Magyar Pedagógusok Egyesülete (Association of Hungarian Teachers of Voivodina), Margit Nagy, president

Individuals:

- Istvan Balint, reporter, Novi Sad
- Zoltan Margit, landscape architect, Čoka
- Bela Muhi, teacher, Novi Sad
- Judit Ronto B., teacher, Turda
- Angela Szabo, reporter, Čantavir
- Sandor Zavarko, mgr., Novi Sad