



Hungary

Introduction

Official Name: Republic of Hungary
Nationality: Hungarian
Area: 93,030 square kilometers (35,919 square miles)
Language: Hungarian
Currency: forint (HUF)
Location: Central Europe; bordered by Austria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine

Statistical Information

Population	9.96 million
0-14 years	15.3 percent
15-64 years	69.3 percent
65+ years	15.4 percent
Birth rate	10 births/1,000
Death rate	13 deaths/1,000
Fertility rate	1.3 children/woman
Pop. growth rate	-0.253 percent
Life expectancy	72.9 years
Literacy	99.4 percent
HIV/AIDS rate	0.1 percent
Below poverty line	8.6 percent
Ethnic groups	92.3 percent Hungarian 1.9 percent Roma 5.8 percent other/unknown
Religion	51.9 percent Roman Catholic 15.9 percent Reformed 3 percent Lutheran 2.6 percent Greek Catholic 12.1 percent other/unspecified 14.5 percent no religious affiliation

Economy

Hungary has completed the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy. It continues to demonstrate strong economic growth, and joined the European Union in May of 2004. There is concern over Hungary's fiscal and account deficits. Inflation has declined from 14 percent in 1998 to 3.7 percent in 2006, but unemployment remains above

six percent. The government is implementing an austerity program aimed at cutting the public sector deficit and the trade deficit, leading to eventual adoption of the euro.

Government

Capital: Budapest

Hungary is a parliamentary democracy. The president is elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term. He is eligible to run for a second term. The prime minister is elected by the National Assembly upon recommendation of the president; other ministers of the cabinet are proposed by the prime minister and appointed by the president. The legislature consists of the National Assembly, or Országgyűlés, whose 386 members are elected by popular vote, under a system of direct and proportional representation, to serve four-year terms.

Climate

Hungary has a temperate climate, with four seasons. Winters are cold, cloudy, and wet, while summers are warm. The coldest month of the year is January, and the warmest months are July and August.

Environmental Concerns

Hungary's standards in waste management, energy efficiency, and air, soil, and water pollution do not yet meet EU standards. Upgrading these standards will require significant additional investments.

History

In ancient times, the territory of Hungary was known as Pannonia. The Roman Empire invaded the territory in 35 B.C., but could not completely subdue the Pannonians until 9 B.C. The land was first added to the Roman province of Illyricum, but after a fierce rebellion from 6 to 9 A.D. Rome dissolved the province of Illyricum, dividing it up into the new provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia.

Near the end of the Roman Empire, a series of barbarian tribes migrated to the region. Under Attila, the Huns built a powerful empire which included modern Hungary. After Hunnish rule declined, the German Ostrogoths and Lombards ruled the region until Slavic tribes began to migrate there. Around 560, the Slavs were supplanted by the Avars, a Turkic/Mongol tribe from central Asia, who retained control for nearly two centuries, until the Franks and Bulgars overthrew them in the early ninth century. The Slavonic kingdom of Great Moravia ruled modern Hungary for the remainder of the century.

At the end of the ninth century, the Magyars conquered the regions of Hungary and Transylvania. Their chief, Arpad, founded the first Magyar dynasty in Hungary. The Magyars intermarried with some of the earlier settlers in the region over the following generations.

St. Stephen, a descendent of Arpad, was crowned Stephen I of Hungary in December of 1000 in the capital city of Esztergom. By 1006, Stephen had eliminated all rivals who wanted either to follow the old pagan ways or to form an alliance with the Byzantine Empire. After solidifying his power, Stephen initiated sweeping reforms to convert Hungary into a feudal state, which included the forced Christianization of the kingdom.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Hungary had the third largest population in medieval Europe. Under Bela III, who reigned from 1172 to 1196, the Kingdom of Hungary came into close contact with French culture. Throughout the reigns of succeeding kings, a few powerful nobles, or magnates, won ever-expanding royal privileges and favors at the expense of the lesser nobles and the peasants. Frustrated, the lesser nobles cornered the extravagant King Andrew II in 1222 and forced him to grant the Golden Bull, known as the Magna Carta of Hungary. The Golden Bull limited the king's power to reserve privilege and authority for the magnates. It also established the beginnings of a parliament.

Under Bela IV, Andrew's son, the Mongols began to threaten Hungary. In 1241, Mongol invaders defeated Bela's armies at Muhi. King Bela fled, and a large portion of Hungary's population died in the ensuing destruction perpetrated by the occupying Mongols. After the Mongols retreated in 1242, King Bela ordered the construction of numerous stone castles, intended for defensive use in the case of a second Mongol invasion. When the royal line of Arpad died out in 1301, Hungary fell into anarchy.

In 1308, Charles Robert of Anjou was elected king of Hungary, establishing the Angevin line of kings. Under his son Louis I, also known as Louis the Great, the Hungarian kingdom reached its greatest territorial expansion, with influence extending into Dalmatia, the Balkans, and Poland.

After Louis' death, a series of foreign rulers controlled Hungary. During their reigns, the Turks began to move into the Balkans, defeating the Hungarians and their allies in three major battles between 1389 and 1444.

After nearly 150 years of war with the Turks, King Louis II was killed by Turkish forces under Suleiman the Magnificent in the Battle of Mohács in 1526. This battle marked the beginning of Ottoman domination in much of Hungary. Ferdinand of Austria claimed the Hungarian throne, and was elected king by a faction of nobles. Another faction of nobles elected John Zapolya, a powerful Hungarian magnate, as king.

During this period of division, the Protestant Reformation swept through Hungary. The Reformation was particularly successful in Transylvania and was supported by many Hungarian nobles. In 1557, the diet of Transylvania proclaimed religious freedom throughout Hungary.

Hungarians continued to resist Austrian domination until the Hungarian nobles finally recognized the Hapsburg claim to the throne in 1687. In the Peace of Kalowitz in 1699, the Turks ceded all Hungarian territory under their control back to the Hapsburg Empire.

In April 1849, Hungarian nationalist leader Louis Kossuth proclaimed Hungary an independent republic. The Hapsburg Empire called on Russia for help, and Russian troops destroyed the new republican government. Hungarians were subjugated for a brief period of time, but following Austria's defeat in the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, Austria was obliged to compromise with Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy was established, in which Austria and Hungary were nearly equal partners.

Following Austria-Hungary's defeat in World War I, the situation in Hungary grew unstable. In 1920, the Treaty of Trianon reduced Hungary's territory by about two-thirds, eliminating all non-Magyar areas as well as areas that were predominantly Hungarian. This deprived Hungary of many of its most valuable natural resources.

In 1941, Hungary declared war on both the USSR and the United States. In March of 1944, the Hungarian government tried to withdraw from World War II and took steps to protect its Jewish population. In retaliation, German troops occupied the country, but they were soon driven out by advancing Soviet troops. The Soviet troops caused much devastation to Hungarian industry, farming, and culture.

Hungary held elections in 1945 and adopted a republican constitution in 1946. The peace treaty signed in Paris in 1947 restored the boundaries established by the Treaty of Trianon and levied \$300 million worth of war reparations on Hungary.

Hungary was proclaimed a People's Republic in 1949, and brutal purges of the Communist Party eliminated any party member who did not adhere closely to the Stalinist line. The new communist government nationalized industry and collectivized land. Hungary joined the Warsaw Treaty Coalition, or Warsaw Pact, in 1955.

On October 23, 1956, an anti-Communist revolution broke out in Hungary, beginning in Budapest. A new coalition government under Imre Nagy withdrew from the Warsaw Pact and appealed to the United Nations for help, but János Kádár, one of Nagy's ministers, formed a counter-government and asked the USSR for military support. Half a million Soviet troops entered Hungary, overthrew the new government, and brutally suppressed the anti-Communist revolution. Nagy and some of his ministers were abducted and later executed, and thousands of other Hungarians, many of them teenagers, were arrested and executed. Around 190,000 Hungarian refugees fled the country.

During the 1980s, Hungary turned to the West for trade and for help in the modernization of its economy. The economy declined and foreign debt skyrocketed, reaching an unpayable level. In 1989, the Communist party congress voted to dissolve itself, and Hungary opened its border with Austria, allowing East Germans to cross to the West.

By 1990, a multiparty system with free elections was established, and political and economic reforms such as a free press, freedom of assembly, and the right to own a private business were initiated. The new democratic government vowed to continue the drive toward a free-market economy while privatizing state-owned enterprises. Democratic Hungary has now succeeded in the complete transition to a free-market economy.

Ethnic Groups

Magyars, or ethnic Hungarians, comprise around 90 percent of Hungary's population. They speak Hungarian. Due to historical events, particularly the Treaty of Trianon, there are sizeable minorities of ethnic Hungarians living in the surrounding countries. Successive Hungarian prime ministers have proposed legislation affording Hungarian citizenship to ethnic Hungarians living in other countries, so far without success.

The number of Romani people, known colloquially as Gypsies, is disputed. In the 2001 census, only 190,000 people claimed to be Roma, but experts believe that 450,000 to 600,000 is a much more realistic number.

Hungary also has very small populations of Serbs, Croats, Germans, Slovaks, Romanians, and Ukrainians. Hungary once encompassed territories where many members from these groups live, but the country lost most of those territories in the Treaty of Trianon.

Religion

The majority of Hungary's citizens are Catholic. Hungary's first king, Saint Stephen, converted the country to Catholicism in the 10th century. Although many Hungarians shifted towards Lutheranism and Calvinism during the Protestant Reformation in the first half of the 16th century, Catholic Jesuit missionaries led a successful counterreformation in the second half of the 16th century. By the 17th century, Hungary was predominantly Catholic again.

Hungarian Protestants comprise around 19 percent of the population. They belong mainly to the Reformed tradition. Protestant churches in Hungary were founded during the Reformation; the eastern part of Hungary remains predominantly Protestant.

Hungary is home to one of the largest Jewish populations in Central and Eastern Europe. The largest synagogue in Europe is in Hungary. During the 19th century, many Jews, fleeing persecution in Russia, settled in Hungary. Hungarian Jews did not escape the Holocaust, however; hundreds of thousands of them were deported to concentration camps or executed.

The Reformed Movement in Hungary

The Reformed movement appeared in Hungary in the 16th century, around the same time as the European Reformation. The Swiss Reformation, and the teachings of John Calvin in particular, rapidly gained ground in the Carpathian Basin. The General Synod

of 1567 marked the birth of the Reformed Church in Hungary; it adopted two great Reformed confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession. By 1600, the vast majority of Hungarians were Reformed; their German and Slovak neighbors were largely Lutheran. The region was heavily divided not only ethnically and religiously, but also politically. Following the Turkish triumph near Mohács in 1526 and the fall of Buda in 1541, the Kingdom of Hungary was divided into three parts. The central parts of the country were under Turkish occupation, the northern and western territories came under the rule of the Austrian Habsburgs, and Transylvania remained a principedom with a Hungarian ruler.

During the period of Turkish occupation in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Reformed Church took over from the weakened state most of the responsibility for education. The Reformation made a lasting impact on the development of Hungarian literature, language, and thought through the translation of the Bible into Hungarian, preaching and prayers in the native language, the adoption of printing, and the development of the school network in the 1530s. Protestantism became so strongly embedded in Hungarian culture that even the Enlightenment could not dislodge it.

The Treaty of Trianon, which officially ended World War I, reduced Hungary's size by two-thirds. A large number of members belonging to the Hungarian Reformed Church found themselves outside the newly drawn borders of the country. They were soon surrounded by foreign languages and foreign religious environments. This separation has persisted—Hungarian Reformed people today are scattered over three distinct areas. There are 1.5 million members of the Hungarian Reformed Church within the boundaries of the modern state of Hungary, around one million in the successor states in the Carpathian Basin, and several million more scattered around the globe.

Due in part to the separation of Reformed Hungarians and the Habsburgs' introduction of the Counterreformation into Hungary, the Reformed Church in Hungary was unable to develop a stable church government. The basic governmental structure of the Reformed Church in Hungary was not established until the Debrecen General Synod of 1881, convened after a political compromise with Austria in 1867. This marked the beginning of the uniformly structured Reformed Church in Hungary. The desire to belong to a unified church had been a common element of Hungarian Reformed thinking.

After four years of preparation, the Debrecen General Synod opened its session on October 31, 1881. The synod laid the foundations of the new church constitution, spelling out three fundamental principles for a unified Hungarian Reformed church: a majority system of decision-making, a collective government, and the principle of parity between clergy and laity. The constitution provided for the establishment of two central authorities: the General Synod, held every 10 years as the supreme legislative assembly of the church, and a consultative body, called the General Convent, informally representing all the Hungarian-speaking Reformed churches in the Carpathian Basin.

In 1948, after the end of World War II, the Hungarian Parliament adopted new legislation which systematized the relationship of the state to the major churches. Despite this legislation, the next 40 years were characterized by Communist oppression of the churches. Church properties were seized, church schools were brought under state control, and religious instruction in public schools was discontinued. Both the public and internal life of the church were significantly reshaped under pressure from the Communist government. Church members were subject to various atrocities, as were other citizens unwilling to conform to the official state ideology. Following the suppression of the 1956 revolution against the Stalinist government, church members who had supported the revolution were subjected to government retribution and punishment.

The perspective of the Communist government from 1948 to 1989 was that the church should limit its activity to whatever it could do inside the walls of its buildings on Sunday morning, unless the state asked it to endorse specific Communist policies. The intention of the state was to undermine the social base of the churches, to educate the young as atheists, and to hinder the administration of church institutions. The government conducted a series of show trials against church leaders, applying the principle of "oust the shepherd and the flock will disperse." The church's membership and the composition of individual congregations, as well as the church's understanding of itself, went through substantial changes during the years of Communist rule.

Political changes in 1989 freed Eastern European nations and their churches, including the Reformed Church in Hungary, from Communist oppression and isolation. The State Office for Church Affairs, the regulatory authority established by the Communist party in Hungary, was shut down. By 1990, Hungary

passed a piece of legislation known as Act IV. Section 1 in the first chapter of the act states that “the freedom of conscience and religion is a basic human right granted to every human, the unobstructed practice of which is ensured by the Republic of Hungary.” Following the political changes, congregational life has intensified and the number of church meetings at regional and national levels has increased. In modern Hungary, young people are free to attend youth camps, youth and adults can participate in local and international church events, and members can enjoy religious programming on television and radio. The Reformed Church in Hungary currently operates one hospital, 64 diaconal institutes, 122 educational institutions, and 11 conference facilities. Advanced theological education takes place in four cities: Debrecen, Budapest, Sárospatak, and Pápa. The institutional work of the church is supplemented by that of ministers, elders, teachers, church musicians, and civil organizations representing the interests of those active in different branches of mission work and youth associations.

The 1,196 parishes that make up the Reformed Church in Hungary today are organized into 27 presbyteries. Each presbytery is led by a pastoral dean and a lay curator. Presbyteries work with congregations in their areas; they also organize various missional, educational, diaconal, and financial activities. Presbyteries also act in a supervisory capacity in the broader Reformed Church structure. The presbyteries are organized into four church districts: Danubian, Transdanubian, Cistibiscan and Transtibiscan. The leadership of each district consists of a bishop and a lay curator. The 100-member General Synod is the supreme legislative and executive body of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The synod elects its pastoral and lay president from the leadership of the church districts.

Influence of the Reformed Church in Hungary

One of the most important strongholds of the Hungarian Reformation was the northeastern region of Hungary, the region which historically provided the foundations for the emerging Hungarian literary language. The language of the Bible of Vizsoly, completed in 1590, proved very powerful. The expressions and phrases of Gáspár Károli, the translator, left an indelible mark on Hungarian vernacular and common thinking. The translation of the Psalms into Hungarian was also significant to the development of the history of the Reformed church. The translation of the Genevan Psalms of Theodore de Bèze and Clement Marot was the work of the scholar Albert Szenczi Molnár (1574-1634),

completed in 1607. Hungarian Reformed believers still use these texts with Genevan tunes. Hungarian Reformed ministers and teachers published the first Hungarian language lexicons, dictionaries, and spelling books in the early modern era. The most important strongholds of the Reformed culture in Hungary for centuries were the famous colleges (Debrecen, Sárospatak, Pápa, Kecskemét, Nagyváradi, Nagyenyed, Kolozsvár, and Marosvásárhely). Many excellent Hungarian poets, scientists, and politicians were educated in those colleges, including Sándor Körösi Csoma, the world-famous Tibet researcher; Ferenc Kölcsey, the author of the Hungarian national anthem; Lajos Kossuth, an outstanding figure in 19th-century national liberal politics; Sándor Petőfi, the spirited poet of the 1848 revolution; and Endre Ady, the reformer of the modern poetic language. For centuries, these colleges educated ministers and theologians of the Reformed Church. These ministers and theologians, by means of their university studies abroad, were constantly in intellectual contact with the important institutions of the European Reformation, including Wittenberg, Geneva, Heidelberg, and Oxford. The position of the Reformed community in Hungary made it the keeper of Hungarian national independence against the claims of the Catholic Habsburg emperors in Vienna. In 1849, during the most significant fight for freedom in Hungary, the traditional center of the Reformed community in Hungary, Debrecen, became the capital of the country for a short time. The dethronement of the Habsburgs took place in the prayer hall of the Reformed college in the city. In addition to its strong affirmation of the authority of Scripture, a main trait of Hungarian Reformed thinking has been the belief that schools and be tools for mission.

Hungarian Reformed Believers in the Diaspora

There are a number of Hungarian Reformed congregations which belong to the Reformed Church in America. These congregations were founded by Hungarian immigrants to the United States and Canada. Beginning in the late 19th century until the beginning of World War I, approximately 1.5 million people came to North America from Hungary in hopes of a better life. A new wave of immigration was set off by the Depression in the 1930s, followed by an increase in the number of political refugees during the Communist dictatorship. The suppression of the 1956 revolution led to even more Hungarians immigrating to North America.

The Hungarian Reformed community in the Diaspora is supported by several organizations. Pastoral care for Hungarian Protestants in Western Europe began

in 1944. The Hungarian Reformed community in northern and western Europe is organized into 80 congregations, coordinated by the Hungarian Reformed Christian Pastoral Service in Western Europe. The service is a framework organization dedicated to preserving the traditions and spiritual values of the Hungarian Reformation, as well as fostering integration into the churches of host countries while retaining the Hungarian language and liturgy where possible.

In North America, several church organizations offer a spiritual home to Hungarian Reformed congregations. In the United States, the most important of these is the autonomous Calvin Synod belonging to the United Church of Christ. The Hungarian Reformed Church in America is an independent church body. Several congregations of Hungarian origin are aligned with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Hungarian Reformed communities in Canada belong to three different denominations and enjoy a special relationship with each other through the Hungarian Ministers' and Elders' Association of Canada.

Belonging to a church community plays an important role in adopting the culture and customs of a foreign country. This applies especially to political refugees, whose emigration was not primarily motivated by economic factors. The greatest problem is often presented by the fact that members of the Diaspora are dispersed, living great distances not only from their homeland but also from each other. Due to the difficulties involved in keeping up relations, these communities often develop in different ways. The question may arise whether adherence to national culture, traditions, and language hinders integration in the new homeland. Generations raised in the language environment of the host country often do not speak Hungarian, making bilingual congregational events especially important to them, and they often only insist on their Hungarian identity as part of a cultural tradition. Under such circumstances, it becomes increasingly difficult for Hungarian congregations to maintain their unique identity.

Following the emigration waves at the end of the 19th century, the Reformed Church in Hungary tried to help the Hungarian Reformed communities abroad by maintaining ministerial positions. After World War I, the shaky financial position of the Hungarian church made this more difficult. The Reformed Church in Hungary's practice of sending a number of its theology students to study abroad each year allowed Hungarian congregations in the diaspora to

maintain contact with congregations in Hungary. Hungary's borders were closed during the Communist dictatorships, which made it very difficult to keep official contacts. There was a continuous flow of political refugees, many of whom were very well educated and had held important roles in the Reformed Church in Hungary. By this point, Hungarian congregations in the Diaspora were self-sustaining. They endeavored to help the Hungarian Reformed churches struggling under a succession of Communist dictatorships. Normal relations were finally restored after the fall of Communism in the 1990s. With the help of various modes of cooperation and representative world gatherings, it again became possible for representatives of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Hungary to meet with representatives of Hungarian Reformed congregations around the world.

Hungarian Reformed Believers in Successor States
For Hungary, the 1920 Treaty of Trianon resulted in the loss of two-thirds of its territory and half its population. Although the newly-born states of Romania, Yugoslavia, Austria, and Czechoslovakia were more ethnically homogenous than they had been under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, several million ethnic Hungarians were left outside the new boundaries of Hungary. Ethnic Hungarians in the Austro-Hungarian successor states constitute the largest ethnic minority in Central Europe today. There is a significant difference between this ethnic minority and that of a dispersion resulting from emigration. In this case, ethnic Hungarians came under the rule of another state based on the political decision of the major victors of World War I. International law at this time barely recognized minority protection norms; provisions contained in the peace treaty existed only on paper. The artificially created state of Yugoslavia was in a similar situation; in spite of similarities in terms of language, different religious traditions, including differences between Christianity and Islam as well as Eastern and Western Christianity, gave rise to tensions. Yugoslavia disintegrated in the last decade of the twentieth century, accompanied by bloody warfare. Hungarian-speaking Reformed churches in the successor states are in a similar position, both in terms of language and religion.

The Hungarian Reformed church bodies were united in 1881, only to be separated again after World War I. From that point on, the liturgy and church law of Hungarian Reformed churches in successor countries developed in an isolated manner. Since whole communities of the church found themselves on different sides of national borders, it became clear

that the church needed to be restructured. The Hungarian Reformed Church was often only grudgingly recognized by the successor states, which unlawfully nationalized church properties in several places and abolished the well-developed organization of church education. Despite severe oppression, Hungarian churches went through a spiritual revival between the two world wars.

Today, there are Hungarian Reformed communities in each of the seven countries which border Hungary. Austria and Slovenia have one congregation each; Romania has the greatest number of Hungarian Reformed communities outside Hungary, organized into two districts. Hungarian Reformed communities in successor states have had a similar experience to those in Hungary after World War II due to the similar historical situation, although Communist oppression was often even worse for the Hungarian ethnic and linguistic minorities in the successor states.

The only exception to this was the congregation in Oberwart, Austria. This congregation was the only community in the Carpathian Basin which did not come under the rule of a Communist dictatorship after World War II; this enabled them to take in political refugees from other Hungarian Reformed communities. The congregation was highly appreciated within the Austrian Reformed community, and its minister served as bishop of the entire Austrian Reformed Church for nearly two decades. The Oberwart Conference, which originated in Austria, became a forum for the free exchange of theological views between the Reformed churches of Europe for over 30 years,

World War II and the Yugoslav wars brought great bloodshed to the Hungarian Reformed community, which was beginning to organize throughout the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav Communist regime permitted relative freedom for churches, but the lack of institutional systems, including theological seminaries, and growing nationalism made the church's life increasingly difficult. By the time the state of Yugoslavia disintegrated, the Yugoslavian Reformed Church had also disintegrated into several distinct congregations. The most significant of these are the Reformed Christian Church of Serbia and the Reformed Christian Church in Croatia.

The Sub-Carpathian Reformed Church belonged to Czechoslovakia until World War II, when it became part of the Soviet Union; since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the church has belonged to Ukraine.

The Sub-Carpathian Reformed Church's position was perhaps the hardest of all the churches in the successor states. Over one-third of its ministers fled at the end of the war, and many who remained were imprisoned or deported to Siberia. In Ukraine, the question was not how the church would live under oppression, but whether the Reformed church could survive at all. The 20th-century Soviet empire with its Orthodox cultural heritage had no knowledge of Protestantism. For this reason, the Sub-Carpathian Reformed Church had to wait until 1990 to receive legal recognition.

Today's Slovakian Reformed Christian Church went through a difficult time after World War II in Czechoslovakia, which disintegrated in 1993. Czechoslovakia was established after World War I with the intention of creating a purely Slavic nation. To achieve this, the country needed to get rid of millions of Germans and hundreds of thousands of Hungarians. The two ethnic minorities, which comprised one-third of the country's population, were subject to pervasive discrimination. All but a few Germans living in Czechoslovakia were deported, but Hungary was able to strike a bargain with Czechoslovakia: the number of Hungarians deported from Czechoslovakia had to equal the number of Slovaks in Hungary willing to relocate.

The largest Hungarian Reformed community in the successor states is part of the Romanian Reformed Church. The work of the two Romanian districts is harmonized by a joint synod; they also have joint divinity education at the Protestant Theology Institute in Kolozsvár. After the Treaty of Trianon, the two districts went in different directions. The Reformed Church District of Transylvania, already in existence during the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, was seamlessly accepted by the state. Pastoral education remained in Kolozsvár; and the other schools of the district continued their work, albeit under more severe state control. The Királyhágómelléki Reformed Church District, established along the border of Hungary, was barely accepted; its congregations previously belonged to the Transilvanian Reformed Church District. Uncertainty in church policy for over two decades diverted energy from the building of congregations and from church school affairs. When the Communists took power in 1948, one of the most severe church persecutions in modern history began. Beginning in 1952 and intensifying in 1956, many ministers of the Reformed and other minority churches were arrested. When Romania received loans from the U.S. for the first time in 1964, the conditions of the agreement included releasing

political prisoners. Most of the arrested ministers were released during the resulting general amnesty. The building of the church was able to restart when political changes were made in 1989. László Tőkés was one of the driving forces behind those political changes. The return of illegally confiscated church properties is a key issue for the church. As nearly every member of the Reformed Churches belongs to the Hungarian ethnic minority, the rights of ethnic minorities are very dear to them. Frequent anti-Hungarian demonstrations resulted in the Reformed churches sounding their voices against all violations of human dignity. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches supported the Romanian Reformed churches in closing statements at recent world meetings. In spite of difficulties, new churches are being built, and congregational work is no longer restricted within the walls of the churches. The Reformed church in Romania is building institutions through which it can carry out its educational, diaconal, and mission work.

After the political changes in the 1990s, several organizations were established with the purpose of facilitating cooperation with the dispersed Hungarian Reformed community. The World Association of Hungarian Reformed Churches, established in 1991, works toward the worldwide coordination of Reformed spiritual life. The Consultation Synod of Hungarian Reformed Churches, established in 1995, aims to operate as a consultative, representative, and demonstrative organ of the Hungarian Reformed community. The General Convent, which has been in operation since the summer of 2004, is a consultative and proposal body of representatives from the dioceses and church districts of the Reformed churches in the Carpathian Basin. The General Convent was created with the goal of reducing the dispersion of the Hungarian-speaking Reformed community in terms of religious life and church law. The churches unified by the General Convent consider the following goals important: mutual exchange of information; unified representation of interests in worldwide church organizations and aid organizations; a more determined exercise of fraternal solidarity toward one another; examining the possibility of unified liturgy and legislation among individual churches; and unification of the organization and content of pastoral and theological education, public education, and institutions of higher education with regard to the traditions of the individual churches and the challenges of the European Union.

The Reformed Church in Hungary made a historical decision at its General Synod on May 26-27, 2005.

The church chose to extend membership specified in the church constitution to the Hungarian Reformed community living all over the world. The wording of the decision clearly shows that universal church membership, in addition to full theoretical unity, will not endanger the autonomy of individual churches; it states that everyone shall exercise their rights and meet their obligations at the place of their residence.

Culture

Food—*Magyar kenyér*, or Hungarian bread, is a staple of the Hungarian diet. Pig breeding is very common in Hungary, so many Hungarians eat lots of pork and pig byproducts. Goulash is a very common dish, as is fisherman's soup, a mixture of poached fish, tomatoes, green peppers, and paprika. Paprika, or pure powdered pepper, is a Hungarian innovation, and is very commonly found in Hungarian cuisine. Other distinctive Hungarian dishes include chicken paprika, *pörkölt* (stew), trout with almond, and goose liver. It is common for Hungarians to drink beer or wine with meals.

Education—Education is compulsory from ages six to 16. Traditionally, most Hungarians considered a high school diploma to be the end goal of education, but in recent years more students are continuing on to higher education.

Etiquette—Hungarian hospitality is characterized by extraordinary efforts to feed and care for their guests. Guests will often be invited to enter the host's home first. It is also common for a Hungarian to touch the hands, arms, or shoulder of another person during conversation.

Dress

Urban Hungarians wear modern clothes, including blue jeans. Name brands are a status symbol, so brands such as Levi's are popular. Successful entrepreneurs wear shiny nylon or polyester leisure suits with expensive, name-brand shoes. As a general rule, Hungarian dress is very Western.

It is possible to see traditional Hungarian dress in some rural areas or during country festivals such as fairs and harvest celebrations, which have regained popularity over the past years. Traditional Hungarian dress is characterized by elaborate, intensive, colorful embroidery.

Travel/Transportation

Buses, trains, and taxis are readily available and reliable for inter-city travel.

Hungarian roads and highways are generally well-maintained. There are often roads under maintenance in Budapest, which are sometimes not marked or blockaded. Rural roads are often narrow and poorly lit, and may be in poor condition. Drivers must be alert on rural roads because pedestrians, farm machinery, and animals often use them as well. Hungary has a zero tolerance policy concerning driving under the influence of alcohol. Police conduct routine road checks and administer breath analysis tests to drivers. Police have also instituted a practice of randomly stopping vehicles to check driver identity documents in order to search for illegal aliens, and to check vehicle registration information. This is especially common in Budapest. It is illegal to use a cell phone while driving in Hungary.

Travelers should apply for an international driving permit (IDP) if they intend to drive in Hungary. An IDP is a document which allows a motorist to operate a vehicle in another nation when accompanied by a valid driver's license from their own country. An IDP is not a license in and of itself; it is a translation of a United States or Canadian license.

Travelers can apply for an IDP in the United States or Canada before they leave. The American Automobile Association (AAA) and the American Automobile Touring Alliance are the only organizations in the U.S. authorized by the State Department to issue IDPs. The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) is authorized to issue IDPs to Canadian citizens. The cost of an IDP is under \$20; the application will need to be accompanied by two passport-sized photos.

Hungary will accept an IDP with an American or Canadian driver's license for up to one year. A Hungarian translation attached to an American or Canadian driver's license is also acceptable. After one year in Hungary, a foreigner or temporary resident must obtain a Hungarian driver's license.

The speed limit on the motorway is 130 kph (80 mph). On highways it is 110 kph (65 mph), and in towns it drops to 50 kph (30 mph). Special carseats are mandatory for infants, and all passengers in a car are required to wear seat belts. Children under age 12 may not sit in the front seat of a car. Right of way goes to cars approaching from the right, unless road signs say otherwise. Right turns on red lights are not legal.

For more information about Hungarian driver's licenses, road taxes, and mandatory insurance,

contact the Hungarian National Tourist Organization Office at www.gotohungary.com.

Illness/Injury

Hungary provides adequate medical treatment, although hospitals and nursing care are not up to Western standards. Doctors are well-trained, but emergency services are largely inadequate. Some doctors, usually located in Budapest, speak English.

Doctors and hospitals in Hungary will generally expect cash payment at the time of service rendered.

Entry/Exit Requirements

A valid passport is required. Americans do not need a visa to enter Hungary for up to 90 days. If you plan to reside or study in Hungary for more than 90 days, you will need a visa. For more information on Hungarian visas, contact the Embassy of the Republic of Hungary, 3910 Shoemaker Street NW, Washington, DC 20008 or at www.huembwas.org.

Immunizations

There are no required immunizations for entrance to Hungary. However, travelers may wish to consider being vaccinated for hepatitis A, which has an intermediate prevalence rate in Hungary. Check with a travel health professional to determine what immunizations, if any, they recommend.

Special Circumstances

Traveler's checks are not universally accepted in Hungary. Most stores will not accept traveler's checks, but banks will cash them, usually for a one percent commission. The number of ATMs is increasing in Budapest and other major cities; while banks are only open on weekdays, ATMs are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Most major credit cards are accepted at banks, ATMs, and participating businesses in Hungary, including MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Cirrus.

Electricity

The voltage in Hungary is 220V/50Hz, with types C and F plugs (two round prongs; type F plugs also have two side grounding contacts). Power converters are needed to use an American appliance in Hungary, since American appliances are designed to run on 120V/60Hz. A set of adapter plugs is necessary to adapt American types A and B plugs to a Hungarian type C or F plug.

Addresses

Transdanubian Reformed Church District
H–8200 Veszprém, Dózsa Gy. u. 26. Pf. 4, Hungary
00 36 88 424 100; 00 36 88 424 100 (fax)
dtpuspoki@gmail.com

Danubian Reformed Church District
H–1092 Budapest, Ráday utca 28, Hungary
00 36 1 218 0753; 00 36 1 218 0903 (fax)
ph@dmrek.hu
www.dmrek.hu

Cistibiscan Reformed Church District
H–3525 Miskolc, Kossuth u. 17, Hungary
00 36 46 563 563; 00 36 46 508 884 (fax)
phivatal@puspokmc.axelero.net
www.reformatus-tiszaninnen.hu

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00 36 52 412 459; 00 36 52 414 744;
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SK–979 01 Rimaszombat, Fő tér 23, Slovakia
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