THE NEW REALITY OF THE ROMANIA-HUNGARY GEOPOLITICAL DYAD. THE ACTIVE/ABSENT DYAD, DRIVEN BY A SINGLE WILL

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ABSTRACT

I will try to identify some of the directions of the new Hungarian geopolitics in Transylvania, with the formal closure of the Orban regime. Is Transylvania still a field of neocolonial action[2] *under the umbrella of the so-called "velvet" irredentism? Or will the new Prime Minister Peter Magyar simply change the oligarchy through which Orban suburbanized Transylvania? Two essential indicators, educational policy, including the attitude of the local Hungarian baronate towards Romanians, as well as cross-border business on obscure channels seem unchanged, which shows us that there will be no change in substance in Romanian-Hungarian relations in Transylvania, at least not in this direction. It is possible that different accents may emerge as a result of the new administration's reorientation towards the European Commission and therefore, the elimination of Hungary's so-called "independence" from "Europe". At the same time, I analyzed the efficiency of "orbaneconmics" and the impact of the former administration's expenses "with Transylvania" on the stability of Hungary. At the same time, we sought to point out the fact that Hungary and Romania are in a binomial that the administrations of the two states do not seem to be making the most of in favor of their peoples.*

Keywords: Irredentism, Transylvania, orbaneconomics, absent state, ethnic supremacy, Romania, Hungary.

1. HUNGARY AND ROMANIA: A NECESSARY PARTNERSHIP?

Not necessarily. However, they are part of the same objective geopolitical complex defined by the Carpathian frontage facing the Tisza.

Are Hungary and Romania part of a geopolitical complex? Indeed, part of a geopolitical binomial?

In light of Simion Mehedinți's theory of geopolitical "facades", we are inclined to believe that yes, Hungary and Romania share a geopolitical complex. This is because these facades are not matters of choice; they are givens of geography and of a people's very existence. Thus, from a geographical standpoint, the facades[3] of the Romanian

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[2] See Romeo Couți, *Lebăda neagră de pe Balaton [The black swan on Lake Balaton]*, Brașov, Creator Publishing Mouse, 2023.

[3] From Mehedinți's work we understand that "facades" are openings of geopolitical significance and essential geographical infrastructure for internal political coherence and strategic communication with

people are the Mountain, the Forest, the Danube, and the Sea[4]. The Carpathians feature multiple openings – such as the Transylvanian basin, which concentrates and unifies the uplands of the plateau lying between the Eastern and Western Carpathians[5] – yet they also "spill" into the Tisza, facing toward the Danube.

The geopolitical binomial refers to a geopolitical configuration (of power) formed by two states/nations that, with or without common interests, are part of an organic geopolitical complex, with common openings of force. In our case, we share with Hungary the Carpathian facade towards the Tisza, with Serbia and Bulgaria the Danube facade of the Carpathians, respectively the Sea. In the Middle Ages, the Romanian Countries functioned together with the Serbian and Bulgarian voivodates, through cross-border matrimonial alliances, they had common religious elites and chancellery language, evidenced by the string of Romanian monasteries south of the Danube and the flow of agricultural population on both sides.

Romania is, therefore, part of a broader, regional binomial series, undervalued for reasons related to the historical legacy of the modern era, collective psychology, and poor preparation of the elites, ideologized by a weak nationalism or, on the contrary, by being included in the progressive anti-national movement.

2. THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND

The geopolitical binomial has several levels: one political and the other social. The social one involves coexistence. Coexistence is the everyday state of relations that are established between different communities but also within them. What is its situation?

At first glance, from the data collected in June in five localities in Mureș County (two each with a predominant Romanian and Hungarian population, and in Târgu-Mureș), we have a situation that denotes the framework for a possible change for the better in coexistence, although the background of the problem remains relatively tense.

What do we find?

Regarding the **potential for healing/tension** – if we take the moment of Târgu-Mureș 1990[6] as a reference point in the analysis of collective psychology trends[7], we observe the following:

other spaces, cultures, and civilizations; without them, a society cannot develop "naturally", nor can it move toward the horizons to which a people naturally aspires. See Simion Mehedinți, *Opere Complete. Volumul I. Geographica [Complete Works. Volume I. Geographica]*, Second Part, Bucharest, The Encyclopaedic Library, the Royal Foundation for Literature and the Arts, 1943.

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 150.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 148.

[6] The events in Târgu-Mureș in March 1990 were a moment of collective violence between Romanians and Hungarians, resulting in casualties on both sides. If they had escalated, they would probably have led to the Yugoslavization of Romania.

[7] Analysis by colors attached during research conducted in Mureș County in June 2026. The research aimed to determine the state of the community, the degree of integration as a whole, and for each ethnic group (Romanians and Hungarians) and was carried out through the application of questionnaires, interviews and group discussions, as well as projective techniques such as mind maps and graphic scales.

– To the extent that the two populations have opportunities to work together[8], we can say that the collective psychological tendency is towards healing, but the background is one of some fear and withdrawal. For 27% of the population, from both communities, Romanian and Hungarian, there is a desire for "healing", followed at some distance by that of fear and withdrawal (21.6%)[9].

– At the level of the Romanian community, the dominant attitude is one of healing (30.2%)[10], followed by that of withdrawal/fear (28%)[11]. A significant share of the investigated population still manifests an attitude of "historical" dissatisfaction (15.1%)[12]. So the dominant attitude is that of healing memory, but this is closely competed with fear and withdrawal. The highest level of tension is present, at the level of both communities, in the age category 26–39 years (25% red), but here we also find the greatest desire to heal memory, four times more expressed (50% green). Young people (18–25 years) almost do not care anymore (45.5% perceive the respective historical phenomenon in gray).

– At the level of the Hungarian community, the dominant attitude is that of "putting aside" the moment of Târgu-Mureș in March 1990, but not of "getting over it", of "healing". Unlike the Romanians investigated, 25% of the Hungarians in the sample are still not willing to make historical reconciliation, even if they have gotten over it (25%, black). It is true, the attitude of healing is also present here, at some distance (20%, green).

Table 1.

Cross-tabulation: the ethnic origin of respondents and the colour associated with the events in Târgu-Mureș in March 1990.

The respondent's ethnicity * What colour springs to mind when you hear about the events in Târgu-Mureș? Crosstabulation

	What colour springs to mind when you hear about the events in Târgu-Mureș?							Total
	Grey	Blue	Red	Black	Green	White	NS/NR	
% within Romanian	28.3%	1.9%	15.1%	13.2%	30.2%	7.5%	3.8%	100.0%
% within Magyar	5.0%	10.0%	20.0%	25.0%	20.0%	10.0%	10.0%	100.0%
% within Gypsy/Roma	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
% within Total by ethnicity	21.6%	5.4%	16.2%	16.2%	27.0%	8.1%	5.4%	100.0%

[8] The statement may seem unusual, but discussions and interviews revealed that the two communities are in a velvet segregation, one that is not formally instituted but is as functional as possible and recognized by both sides, practiced by institutions to a large extent.

[9] The dominant color across both communities is green (27%), followed by gray (21.6%). The methodology is still at the hypothesis stage. However, the associations were confirmed by interviews and focus groups.

[10] Green.

[11] Gray.

[12] This is expressed by the choice of the color red.

Regarding **community coherence**, determined by the mental map method (coherence of the graphic recollection of one's own settlement), we recorded the following, at the level of both communities:

– *Community coherence*[13] is present in 37% of the investigated localities, through the presence of symbolic axiality,

– Romanian communities are "gathered" in a share of 41%, while,

– Hungarian ones are considered gathered in a share of 16%.

We can say that, in Mureș County, collective memory is in the process of healing, but the tensions of memory are still strong. Paradoxically, although Hungarians are much more coherently represented politically, many of them seem to be less attached to their own locality, which denotes ethnic/community fatigue induced, perhaps, by the excess of ideological historicization. This is an aspect that absolutely requires in-depth study.

3. THE SITUATION OF THE ROMANIA-HUNGARY BINOMIAL

The relationship with Hungary is more special, due to the fact that it has a political will that often exceeds the framework of its borders, and acts right in the heart of Romanianness, in the Carpathian center, on an axis that tends to reach the Danube Mouths. The two states/nations constitute, more precisely, a geopolitical binomial. Binomial, meaning two actors who share the same framework and who move for both of them depending on the force and direction applied by each of them. The binomial also functions with a single factor of will, just like a bicycle with two pairs of pedals. As for the direction, it can only be negotiated when it is not simply given by the *interested party*.

Thus, for 35 years, we have been part of a binomial with Hungary thanks to the latter which, unlike the Romanian state, has historical initiative and therefore manifests itself as an actor with its own will. In this way, Hungary managed to activate *its part* of the Carpathian facade from the Tisza, but, due to Romanian absenteeism, it does so from its perspective, which at least during Viktor Orban's time was marked by the toxic energy of irredentism of a construct that historically never existed: Greater Hungary.

In this way, as the file of the relationship between the two states shows, it came to the point that, in Transylvania, at least during the period when Viktor Orban was prime minister (2010–2026), Romania moved to an alert process of de-sovereignization and de-statization, while Hungary built a true parallel infrastatity, including co-opting Romanian institutions, supported by the Romanian taxpayer. The co-opting consisted in the lack of reaction of the institutions in the face of the Hungarian offensive, covering up its advance or even agreeing to the demonization of Romanian patriotism

[13] These are the indicators that represent the "gathered community" *vs* "scattered", depending on the existence and typology of symbolic/functional centrality in personal cartographic representations of their own communities.

while the irredentism from Hungary was ignored or even supported with Romanian public funds. In this way, entire communities were de facto segregated in Transylvania, with Romanians ending up, even where they have numerical parity, underrepresented in the administration, being transformed into a *local minority*[14].

The main political expression of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) has been transformed into a channel of regional influence for Hungary, whose monopoly is now being questioned[15] – which is an excellent opportunity for Bucharest to rethink its role.

4. THE COSTS OF HUNGARIAN GEOPOLITICAL OVEREXTENSION (ORBAN GOVERNMENT 2010–2026)

Being a geopolitical binomial with a single actor, the Romania-Hungary relationship has been deeply unbalanced and there are no signs that it will be otherwise, for the simple reason that the *state apparatus in Romania* does not understand how to assume a role regarding Romania's interests. Consequently, the only active actor of the binomial given by the Carpathian facade remained Hungary.

Indeed, the activism of the Hungarian state, Orban's nationalism, revealed once again the validity of Iorga's thesis regarding the failure of any state policy that overbids and ultimately tires the vitality of its own people. *Vitality* is not an "accumulation of forces", Iorga showed[16], but "the capacity of a people, [which] even without a leader and organization, is able to achieve something", being "a permanent state", through which it achieves "things that are at an exceptional level"[17]. The will of the leader does not overlap with national vitality, on the contrary, it wastes it if it directs the potential of a people in a direction that is not appropriate for it. The direction appropriate for the Hungarian people is coexistence with the Romanians within the Carpathian facade, not the transformation of the latter into a second-rate population through fabulous investments in ethnic supremacism.

Let's see the data.

Between 2017 and 2021, Hungary invested in Transylvania amounts that exceeded 1% of the state budget. The goal? The establishment of a supremacist nation in Transylvania through culture, education and a parallel economy, but deeply dependent on Budapest, through an oligarchic network of local barons.

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[14] Radu Baltasiu (coord.), *Situația actuală a frontierei de nord-vest a României la 100 de ani de la Tratatul de la Versailles. Raport de cercetare [The Current Status of the North-Western Romanian border 100 years after the Treaty of Versailles, Research Report]*, Bucharest, Ethnological Publishing House, 2022, p. 53.

[15] Sabina Fati, „Analiză: Peter Magyar și noua politică a Ungariei în Ardeal" ["Analysis: Peter Magyar and Hungary's new policy in Transylvania"], in *DW*, April 13, 2026, Available at: https://www.dw.com/ro/analiz%C4%83-peter-magyar-%C8%99i-noua-politic%C4%83-a-ungariei-%C3%AEn-ardeal/a-76760622, Accessed on September 10, 2026.

[16] Nicolae Iorga, *Hotare și spații naționale. Afirmarea vitalității românești [Borders and national areas. Affirming Romanian vitality]*, Introductory study by Mihai Ungheanu, Afterword by Sever Ardelean, Galați, Porto Franco Publishing House, 1996, p. 221.

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 223.

More precisely, the Orban Government has injected into Transylvania during the 15 years of governance (2011–2026) about 1.5–2 billion euros[18], if not 3 billion[19]:

[18] Compiled info from:

1. Ada Constanda, „INVESTIGAȚIE. 18 milioane de euro au fost dați de către guvernul Viktor Orbán pentru 16 companii din Transilvania, multe conectate politic. Banii trec printr-o fundație la care s-a referit și un actual consilier al președintelui Nicușor Dan" ["INVESTIGATION. The Viktor Orbán government has allocated 18 million euros to 16 companies in Transylvania, many of which have political links. The money is channelled through a foundation that was also mentioned by a current adviser to President Nicușor Dan"], in *Hot News*, October 22, 2025, Available at: https://hotnews.ro/investigatie18milioane deâeuroaufostdatidecatreguvernulviktororbanpentru16companiidintransilvaniamulteconectatepoliticbaniitre cprintrofundatie-la-care-s-a-referit-si-un-2092077, Accessed on September 10, 2026.

2. The G4Media Editorial Team, „Snoop.ro: Guvernul Viktor Orbán distribuie aproape 18 milioane de euro în Transilvania, o parte din bani au ajuns la firmele politicienilor UDMR" ["Snoop.ro: Viktor Orbán's government is distributing nearly 18 million euros in Transylvania; some of the money has gone to companies owned by UDMR politicians"], in *G4media*, October 23, 2025, Available at: https://www.g4media.ro/guvernulviktororbandistribuieaproape-18milioanedeeurointransilvania-o-parte-din-bani-au-ajuns-la-firmele-politicienilor-udmr.html, Accessed on September 10, 2026.

3. Teodora Stroe, „Guvernul lui Viktor Orban a finanțat cu 5 milioane de euro presa de limbă maghiară din Transilvania înainte de alegerile din aprilie 2026/Banii au ajuns în România prin intermediul Asociației pentru Spațiul Media Transilvan" ["Viktor Orban's government provided 5 million euros in funding to the Hungarian-language media in Transylvania ahead of the April 2026 elections/The money reached Romania through the Association for the Transylvanian Media Space"], in *G4Media*, June 29, 2026, Available at: https://www.g4media.ro/guvernulluiorbanafinantatcu 5milioanedeeuropresadelimbamaghiara-din-transilvania-inainte-de-alegerile-din-aprilie-2026-banii-au-ajuns-in-romania-prin-intermediulasociatieipentruspatiu.html, Accessed on September 15, 2026.

4. Mihai Roman, „Guvernul Ungariei investește 77 de milioane de euro în proiecte din Ținutul Secuiesc. Proiectele pot fi depuse doar în limba maghiară" ["The Hungarian Government is investing 77 million euros in projects in the Székely Land. Project proposals may only be submitted in Hungarian"], in *G4Media*, November 21, 2018, Available at: https://www.g4media.ro/guvernul-ungariei-investeste77demilioanedeeuroinproiecte-dintinutulsecuiescproiectelepotfidepusedoarinlimba maghiara.html, Accessed on September 10, 2026.

5. Oana Despa, „Imperiul media din Ardeal al lui Viktor Orbán se prăbușește. Câți bani a investit Budapesta în presa din România" ["Viktor Orbán's media empire in Transylvania is collapsing. How much money has Budapest invested in the Romanian press?"], in *Europa Liberă România*, Novembre 8, 2022, Available at: https://romania.europalibera.org/a/presamaghiar%C4%83-falit%C4%83/32120687.html, Accessed on September 9, 2026.

6. The G4Media Editorial Team, „Cum funcționează sistemul de subvenții al Ungariei în Transilvania de aproape 3 miliarde de euro: finanțări pentru structuri religioase, fundații apropiate de UDMR și presa loială lui Viktor Orban" ["How Hungary's subsidy scheme in Transylvania, worth nearly 3 billion euros, works: funding for religious organisations, foundations with close ties to the UDMR, and media outlets loyal to Viktor Orbán"], in *G4Media*, September 30, 2025, Available at: https://www.g4media.ro/cumfunctioneazasistemuldesubventiialungarieiintransilvania-de-aproape3miliarde deeurofinantaripentrustructurireligioase-fundatiiapropiatedeudmrsipresaloialaluiviktororban.html, Accessed on September 15, 2026.

7. Zoltán Sipos, "The Hungarian community in Transylvania, flooded with financial support from Hungary. These are the biggest winners", in *Átlátszó Erdély*, February 8, 2019, Available at: https://atlatszo.ro/en/english/thehungariancommunity-in-transylvania-flooded-with-financial-support-from-hungary-here-are-the-biggest-winners/, Accessed on September 8, 2026.

8. Zoltán Sipos, „Punguța cu doi bani: 5 milioane de euro pe an pentru trustul media maghiar din Transilvania" ["A pittance: 5 million euros a year for the Hungarian media group in Transylvania"], in

- through the *Bethlen Gabor Fund*, about 1.2 billion euros – amounts intended especially for the symbolic level of Hungarian suprematism[20], such as salaries for teachers, subsidies for the press and religions, repairs to kindergartens. Of these amounts, 70% reached Transylvania.
- Through the "Pro Economica" program, another 312 million euros, through direct financing of entrepreneurship in Mureș, Harghita, Covasna.
- The third pillar – Sports and Education infrastructure, about 250 million euros, through which the stadiums with too few spectators in Sfântu Gheorghe and Miercurea Ciuc, the ice rinks and the campuses of Sapientia University were built. Analysts of the phenomenon have categorized the phenomenon of "stadiums without spectators" as "sports [nationalist] megalomania"[21]. Their goal was to create networks of political loyalty through sports and cultivate national pride in a "tailor-made" architectural framework and through dependence on Budapest funds[22].

Átlátszó Erdély, July 28, 2021, Available at: https://atlatszo.ro/ro/romana/punguta-cu-doi-bani-5-milioane-de-euro-pe-an-pentru-trustul-media-maghiar-din-transilvania/, Accessed on September 15, 2026.

9. Irina Breilean, „Investigație RFE/RL: De ce finanțează Ungaria comunități din diaspora?" ["RFE/RL Investigation: Why is Hungary funding diaspora communities?"], in *Europa Liberă România,* July 9, 2021, Available at: https://romania.europalibera.org/a/investitie-ungaria-in-diaspora/31350553.html, Accessed on September 6, 2026.

10. The Afaceri News Editorial Team, "Daună totală: «tămâierea» presei maghiare din Ardeal cu banii Budapestei, un fiasco zgomotos" ["Total damage: the 'flattering' of the Hungarian press in Transylvania with money from Budapest – a resounding fiasco"], in *Afaceri News*, Decembre 30, 2024, Available at: https://www.afaceri.news/dauna-totalatamaiereapreseimaghiare-din-ardeal-cu-banii-budapestei-un-fiasco-zgomotos/, Accessed on September 7, 2026.

11. Átlátszó Erdély, "ÁTLÁTSZÓ ERDÉLY: UDMR vrea controlul trustului media finanțat de guvernul Orbán, trust care deține o parte covârșitoare a presei de limbă maghiară din Transilvania" ["ÁTLÁTSZÓ ERDÉLY: The UDMR wants control of the media group funded by the Orbán government, which owns the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian-language press in Transylvania"], in *Presshub*, July 29, 2026, Available at: https://www.presshub.ro/atlatszoerdelyudmrvreacontrolultrustuluimediafinantat-de-guvernul-orban-trust-care-detineopartecovarsitoare-a-presei-de-limba-maghiara-din-transilvania-413920/, Accessed on August 10, 2026.

[19] Ada Constanda, „Cum cumpără guvernul Viktor Orbán influență în România: 18 milioane de euro pentru companii din Transilvania" ["How Viktor Orbán's government is buying influence in Romania: €18 million for companies in Transylvania"], in *Snoop*, October 22, 2025, Available at: https://snoop.ro/cum-cumparaguvernulviktororbaninfluentainromania-18milioanedeeuropentrucompanii dintransilvania/, Accessed on September 10, 2026.

[20] Jerguš Ferko, *Maghiarii sub semnul (auto)amăgilor [Hungarians under the sign of (self) deceptions]*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Publishing House, 2019.

[21] The optimal ratio between the population of a locality and the stadium that serves it is about 3–5% (stadium capacity of the locality's population). The Sepsi OSK stadium in Sfântu Gheorghe was built to accommodate 17% of the city's population, and the one in Miercurea Ciuc should accommodate 11%.

[22] See:

1. David Goldblatt and Daniel Nolan, "Viktor Orbán's reckless football obsession", in *The Guardian*, January 11, 2018, Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jan/11/viktor-orban-hungary-prime-minister-reckless-football-obsession, Accessed on September 10, 2026.

All these amounts meant a huge opportunity cost for Hungary. Instead of transforming Transylvania into a productive economic actor, they accentuated the dependence of the Hungarian-speaking population on Budapest, generating the enrichment of a local oligarchy and too few effects of the relationship with the Hungarian economy. Orban invested too little in the future – in the local productive economy and education, and too much in the past – in the palaces of the counts. The investment in education was also in the past, through programs that inoculated medieval segregationist myths inspired by the *unio trio nationum*, from the time when Romanians had no political rights in Transylvania. So was the investment in the economy, as Orban tried to separate what could not be separated: local economic flows from those of the Romanian economy – the profits of Szekler companies depend largely on the Romanian economy.

All these investments were part of the economic nationalism of Orban's policy – the so-called "orbanomics", characterized by unorthodox economic nationalism founded on artificial pillars. What do they consist of?

We have seen the first one: the myth of ethnic supremacism through culture and sports.

The second consisted of a complex nationalist social economy – meant to support domestic demographic growth with special openings towards China. Specifically, the Orban regime imposed special taxes on Hungarian multinationals to finance subsidies granted to national companies run by elites loyal to the ruling party (FIDESZ) and to finance demographic policy. In parallel, it capped the prices of utilities, fuel and basic food, and subsidized housing credit, which led to the distortion of the economy and the suffocation of small producers, respectively the increase in housing prices. Because the currency needed external support to support the above policies, and through aggressive rhetoric he alienated EU funds, Orban turned to China, promoting a very broad opening towards it. Basically, Orban tried to replace the post-Covid European cohesion funds blocked by the European Commission, worth 17 billion euros, with Chinese investments and loans worth 16 billion euros[23]. However, the Chinese investments came with commercial credits, not preferential, with secret clauses, some of which were for short

2. Marian Pavalasc, "How Viktor Orban Is Using Sports To Expand Hungary's Influence Abroad", in *Radio Free Europe. Radio Liberty*, August 7, 2022, Available at: https://www.rferl.org/a/hungaryorbansportinfluenceromania/31977287.html, Accessed on September 10, 2026.

3. Babett Oroszi, "The Orban government spent billions on Hungarian football clubs in Serbia, Romania and Slovakia", in *Atlatszo*, November 28, 2022, Available at: https://english.atlatszo.hu/2018/12/11/the-orbangovernmentspentbillionsonhungarian-football-clubs-in-serbia-romania-and-slovakia/, Accessed on September 9, 2026.

4. Dan Udrea, „Ce ascund milioanele de euro ale lui Viktor Orban. Între 2022 și 2025, Ungaria a finanțat Sepsi și Csikszereda cu 50.000.000 euro. Ce așteaptă, la schimb, premierul maghiar" ["What lies behind Viktor Orbán's millions of euros? Between 2022 and 2025, Hungary provided Sepsi and Csikszereda with 50,000,000 euros in funding. What does the Hungarian Prime Minister expect in return?"], in *Golazo*, March 30, 2026, Available at: https://golazo.ro/sepsi-csikszereda-finantareviktor-orban-ungaria-169421, Accessed on September 15, 2026.

[23] Jordyn Dahl, "Xi Jinping uses cold hard cash to keep Viktor Orbán close China is Hungary's No. 1 foreign investor, and Budapest is powering ahead in EV production", in *Politico*, May 9, 2024, Available at: https://www.politico.eu/article/viktororbanxijinpinghungarychinapartnership-electric-vehicles-investments-cooperation/, Accessed on September 8, 2026.

periods of about 3 years. Moreover, in order to receive the 16 billion euros from the Chinese in the form of investments and loans, Orban offered facilities of 4.1 billion euros. Apparently, Orban made a master geopolitical move. But, in addition to the financial conditions that only in the short term responded to Hungary's needs, from an economic point of view they came with at least two additional burdens for Hungary: a huge pressure on utilities, especially in terms of energy consumption, and on the labor force – which is why the immigration rate has increased – a paradox of Orbanomics – in the name of economic nationalism brings workers from Southeast Asia. The social costs are still high, because Orbanomics has neglected the health system, education and other public services. Thus, the construction of huge Chinese battery factories will increase Hungary's energy consumption by 33% by 2030[24]. All this took place against the background of a structural budget deficit that collapsed in 2025, when the deficit reached 6.5% of GDP, at which point the Fidesz government had to completely freeze public spending[25]. The deficit reached 8.3% of GDP in 2026[26], at which point Peter Magyar took over the government, achieving an exceptional turnaround, with the help of European funds[27].

At the same time, **Orbanist nationalism has failed to stop Hungary's demographic decline**, practically the third major target of his policies besides the soft recovery of Transylvania and independence from Brussels.

Here, in brief, is the evolution of the main indicators of the two countries:

Hungary, in 2016, had a GDP per capita of 69% of the EU average, so that in 2026 it would reach 76.6%.

Romania, in 2016, had a GDP per capita of 59% of the EU average, so that in 2026 it would reach 78% of the EU average[28].

The natural population growth, practically the indicator that shows that a population is truly prosperous, has involuted in Hungary from –3.5 per thousand in 2016 to –4.3 per thousand in 2026. In Romania, the same indicator has involuted from –3.2% per thousand in 2016 to –4.8% per thousand, which shows that both populations are unhappy in relation to society and the state[29].

[24] Adam Magyar, "The Hungarians Saying 'No' to EV Battery Factories in Their Backyards Viktor Orban wants to use the EU's 'green transition' to make Hungary great again, but his embrace of a dirty industry has sparked grassroots resistance", in *Balkansight*, December 18, 2025, Available at: https://balkaninsight.com/2025/12/18/the-hungarians-saying-notoevbatteryfactoriesintheirbackyards/fellowship/, Accessed on September 15, 2026.

[25] Alexandra Pele, „Ungaria îngheață unele cheltuieli după ce deficitul bugetar ajunge la 8 mld. dolari" ["Hungary freezes certain expenditure after the budget deficit reaches $8 billion"], in *Curs de Guvernare*, May 13, 2025, Available at: https://cursdeguvernare.ro/ungaria-ingheata-unele-cheltuieli-dupa-ce-deficitul-bugetar-ajunge-la-8-mld-dolari.html, Accessed on September 8, 2026.

[26] European Commission, "Economic forecast for Hungary. The latest macroeconomic forecast for Hungary", in *European Commission*, May 21, 2026, Available at: https://economyfinance.ec.europa.eu/economicsurveillanceeumemberstates/countrypagesincludingcountryreports/hungary/economic-forecast hungary_en, Accessed on September 5, 2026.

[27] *Ibidem*.

[28] Eurostat, "Purchasing power parities and GDP per capita – preliminary estimate", in *Eurostat*, March 25, 2026, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php?title=Purchasing_power_parities_and_GDP_per_capita_–_preliminary_estimate, Accessed on September 4, 2026.

[29] Eurostat, "Interactive publications, Demography of Europe – 2026 edition", in *Eurostat*, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/demography-2026, Accessed on September 13, 2026.

Despite a government without a Country project, Romania has managed to recover more of the gaps with the EU. It remains to be seen what factors have facilitated this: a larger economy, a society less tired than the Hungarian one (with more "vitality"), a better relation with the European Commission etc.

It also remains to be seen what happens to the parallel economy established by the Orban regime in Romania. It will probably continue to expand, acquiring/developing critical logistics and production structures, maintaining its objectives, given that Romanian statehood is almost absent in the area. The hypothesis is that the Fidesz oligarchy has built a real economic bastion in Transylvania[30].

5. REFERRENCES

At the moment, Hungary, as a result of Orbanist economic nationalism, which centered on the "recovery of Transylvania" through decoupling from Brussels and with the help of Chinese loans and investments, is in the midst of a reassessment by the Magyar government.

However, the new Peter Magyar government, although it has abandoned the "culture war" rhetoric with Brussels, is positioned on a "critically pro-European" paradigm and, as far as we are concerned, seems focused on making politics in Transylvania more efficient financially rather than abandoning it.

It remains to be seen to what extent the new government will abandon the "soft irredentism" of the Orban government. For example, **the parallel economic**

[30] The *Agrofert* case is telling: „Date comerciale analizate de RISE arată că firme din grupul Agrofert, fondat de premierul ceh Andrej Babiš, au cumpărat direct și indirect cereale provenite din Ucraina de zeci de milioane de dolari, în pofida discursului lor public critic la adresa Ucrainei și a poziționării de partea fermierilor afectați. Fluxurile au ajuns în România prin traderi regionali și alte verigi comerciale, inclusiv companii care au importat masiv cereale din Ucraina de la firme investigate de autoritățile de la Kiev pentru ample operațiuni de evaziune fiscală. Afacerile lui Babiš și investitorii din cercul-zero al fostului premier Orbán se întâlnesc astăzi în același lanț agroindustrial: de la comerțul cu cereale ucrainene până la o fabrică de furaje din județul Mureș, inaugurată de același Viktor Orbán în 2019. Și Péter Magyar, actualul prim-ministru al Ungariei, a fost până anul trecut în conducerea grupului maghiar apropiat de Orban, rivalul său la recentele alegeri parlamentare de la Budapesta". ["Trade data analyzed by RISE shows that companies in the Agrofert group, founded by Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, directly and indirectly bought tens of millions of dollars worth of grain from Ukraine, despite their public critical discourse on Ukraine and their stance on the side of affected farmers. The flows reached Romania through regional traders and other commercial links, including companies that massively imported grain from Ukraine from companies investigated by the Kiev authorities for extensive tax evasion operations. Babiš's businesses and the investors from former Prime Minister Orbán's circle-zero meet today in the same agro-industrial chain: from the trade in Ukrainian grain to a feed factory in Mureș County, inaugurated by the same Viktor Orbán in 2019. Péter Magyar, the current Prime Minister of Hungary, was also at the helm of the Hungarian group close to Orbán, his rival in the recent parliamentary elections in Budapest"], in Romana Puiuleț, „PROFIT DE PE URMA RĂZBOIULUI: apropiații premierilor Orbán și Babiš, comerț în România cu cereale din Ucraina" ["PROFITING FROM THE WAR: associates of Prime Ministers Orbán and Babiš trade in Ukrainian grain in Romania"], in *Rise Project*, June 16, 2026, Available at: https://www.riseproject.ro/investigations/uncategorized/profitdepeurmarazbouluiapropiatii-premierilor-orban-si-babis-comert-in-romania-cu-cereale-din-ukraina/, Accessed on September 15, 2026.

network created by Orban seems to be expanding in Transylvania (see the case of Agrofert, which, through people around the former prime minister, bought Romanian logistics chains and runs complex grain businesses in Romania)[31]. Given the inertia of the Romanian side, huge profits are redirected to Budapest, Romania, Transylvania in particular, being a zone of neocolonial surplus value extraction.

Although the new government of Peter Magyar announced an audit and a revaluation of public spending, subsidies in education continue, even if, apparently, new constructions seem to have stopped.

It remains to be seen to what extent Hungary will become an efficient bureaucratic and economic state in relation to its irredentist stake in Transylvania. It is certain, however, that these consume substantial funds that can contribute to the imbalance of the Hungarian state and society, not only through unproductive expenses, but also through the development of oligarchies that, in principle, are resource consumers. It would be a huge achievement for Hungary to summarize its sovereignist discourse only on its irredentist dimension in relation to the only state that allows it, Romania, while with Brussels, from which it needs money, it will change its paradigm towards a softer sovereignty, somehow integrated into the Brussels discourse. Without Brussels' money, Hungary will no longer be able to support economic expansion in Transylvania. On the other hand, Romania still has one more layer to manage: that of the oligarchy created by the Orbanist parallel economy, which acts according to colonial criteria in Transylvania, dealing with the collection of revenues and sending them to Budapest, which in turn has a new source of income for other projects, including Transylvania.

6. CONCLUSIONS

We have no data to prove that the attitude of the parallel state structure has changed its fundamental attitude towards Romanian-Hungarian coexistence. We have two indicators: the network of *Agrofert*-type mega-businesses that continues unhindered and the situation of the Romanian high school "Mihai Viteazu" in Sfântu Gheorghe. If the first, which we have already referred to above, involves a group of officials or former officials who have acquired strategic logistical and cereal resources in the relationship with Ukraine and Romania (in Transylvania and beyond), the second concerns the openly discriminatory attitude of Romanians, through the concept of ethnic supremacy promoted by the Hungarian elites tolerated by Bucharest: I will conclude this material with the excellent synthesis related to this last topic by the investigative journalist Romeo Couți:

> "I insist on this topic not out of hostility towards the Hungarian community nor against the Szekler heritage. On the contrary, I believe that every community has the right to protect its history and identity.

[31] *Ibidem.*

I insist because I am a journalist and I consider it my obligation to ask why, in a county where millions are found for the restoration of castles and mansions, the students of the 'Mihai Viteazul' National College in Sfântu Gheorghe end up starting another school year in containers.

I will not accept that a criticism addressed to the UDMR administration is artificially transformed into a Romanian-Hungarian conflict. I criticize an administration and its priorities, not an ethnicity.

I will insist until someone offers not explanations, but solutions. Because these children have the right to normal educational conditions now, not sometime.

The Covasna County Council announces with satisfaction the completion, this month, of the restoration of Mikó Castle in Olteni. The investment: 20 million lei, financed through the PNRR, with the County Council's own contribution of 11.7 million lei.

In the same county, in another place, however, there are already six years of construction, of postponed promises, of dust and impatience. Six years in which over a thousand children – Romanians from Sfântu Gheorghe, from Covasna – learned to do their homework on makeshift benches, to keep their clothes in bags, to wait for their break on a sports field transformed into a container yard.

Mayor Antal Árpád says it's 'normal'. That it shouldn't be viewed through an ethnic lens.

It's not a dispute with a builder. It's a firm message from Kelemen Hunor and the UDMR. A worrying message to which the response is the silence of Bucharest and the national press"[32].

So the aforementioned geopolitical binomial works according to the active/absent principle, in which one of the actors exhausts its ethnic community by ideologizing history and the other by abandoning statehood. The result? Communities alienated from themselves – either through the phenomenon called

[32] „Insist asupra acestui subiect nu din ostilitate față de comunitatea maghiară și nici împotriva patrimoniului secuiesc. Dimpotrivă, cred că fiecare comunitate are dreptul să-și protejeze istoria și identitatea.

Insist pentru că sunt jurnalist și consider că este obligația mea să întreb de ce, într-un județ în care se găsesc milioane pentru restaurarea castelelor și conacelor, elevii Colegiului Național «Mihai Viteazul» din Sfântu Gheorghe ajung să înceapă încă un an școlar în containere.

Nu voi accepta ca o critică adresată administrației UDMR să fie transformată artificial într-un conflict româno-maghiar. Critic o administrație și prioritățile ei, nu o etnie.

Voi insista până când cineva va oferi nu explicații, ci soluții. Pentru că acești copii au dreptul la condiții normale de educație acum, nu cândva.

Consiliul Județean Covasna anunță cu satisfacție finalizarea, în această lună, a restaurării Castelului Mikó din Olteni. Investiția: 20 de milioane de lei, finanțată prin PNRR, cu o contribuție proprie a Consiliului Județean de 11,7 milioane de lei.

În același județ, în alt loc însă, sunt deja șase ani de șantier, de promisiuni amânate, de praf și de nerăbdare. Șase ani în care peste o mie de copii – români din Sfântu Gheorghe, din Covasna – au învățat să-și facă temele pe bănci improvizate, să-și țină hainele în saci, să-și aștepte pauza pe un teren de sport transformat în curte de container.

Primarul Antal Árpád spune că e «normal». Că nu trebuie privit prin cheie etnică. Nu e un litigiu cu un constructor. E un mesaj ferm din partea lui Kelemen Hunor și a UDMR-ul. Un mesaj îngrijorător la care riposta e tăcerea Bucureștiului și a presei naționale", in Romeo Couți, „Viziunea UDMR: milioane pentru trecut, containere pentru viitor" ["The UDMR's vision: millions for the past, containers for the future"], in *Romeo Couți/Lebăda Neagră*, August 10, 2026, Available at: https://romeocouti.substack.com/p/viziunea-udmr-milioane-pentru-trecut, Accessed on September 6, 2026.

"invented community", through the overrepresentation of the past, and another is dissolved through self-stigmatization, as we have shown following our field studies. The result? We fear that this oligarchic colonialism founded by the Orban regime will continue in Transylvania. Based on "soft" ethnic supremacism, no matter how rationalized from a cost perspective, it will remain just as socially inefficient, and the two communities will be just as exposed to the serious challenges of history.

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