

APPENDIX

Chronology 1988–1989

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1988, Jan. 1	Free travel right of nationals introduced in Hungary (residence abroad for 90 days or for 5 years or up to expiry of the passport but a fine is complied for over-staying abroad and a personal hearing at Metropolitan Police was also ordered)
Jan. 12–14	Meeting of the working group of the Warsaw Pact responsible for human rights and humanitarian issues in Sophia. The main goal of Hungary is to include the national minorities' rights in the third „basket” of the Helsinki Convention. Nevertheless, it is not supported by the rest of the participating member states.
Jan. 25	<p>Secretary Szűrös M, Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) giving interview in the Hungarian Radio: since 1st January nobody was forced to return to Romania unless s/ he was coming for pure economic reasons or illegally. Ethnic Hungarians are in need of guardianship of Hungary and proper regulations on their supports have to be prepared as it was urged by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament.</p> <hr/> <p>Secretary of Central Committee of HSWP, Németh M. visits Germany for preparation further 1 billion DM dept to Hungary from which 200 million DM would be kept in stock as financial cover supporting Romanian refugees resided in Hungary. This purpose of dept draws the public attention to the Romanian village destroying actions and minority issues.</p> <hr/> <p>A statement is issued and signed by hundreds of intellectuals in Budapest condemning the political era of Ceausescu and declaring solidarity with those fighting against the dictatorship. The notice was published at an international press conference chaired by Vásárhelyi, M. in the apartment of Für, L.</p>

1988, Jan. 28	Spokesman of the government denied the deportation of 200 ethnic Hungarians (Romanian citizens) while number of applications for residence submitted by Romanian citizens was growing (in 1985: 3550 applicants and from them ethnic Hungarian was 1709, in 1987: 9068 and from them 6499 persons were ethnic Hungarians).
Jan. 29	Menedék (Refuge) Committee (civil organisation) is established aiming to provide equal rights for all refugees and residing persons regardless ethnic origin. It submits numerous petitions requiring publicity and manages supports, shelters, jobs for newcomers in need.
Jan.-Feb.	There were 401 Hungarian citizens as asylum seekers in Austria (in 1987: 349, in 1988: 690 during the same period of the year) by Die Presse, Free Europe Radio
Feb. 1	The Bishop of Reformed Church Tóth K. appointed the congregation in Rákosszentmihály as central support coordination for newcomers from Romania (Transylvania) A silent demonstration protesting against Ceaușescu's politics in front of the Romanian Embassy in Budapest is dismissed by the police.
Feb. 13	Write-up on solidarity toward kin-minorities even in socialism without automatic guarantees in minority protection and critics to the past; kin-minority issues are part of the bilateral relations (article by department leaders on foreign affairs of the HSWP, Szokai and Tabajdi).
Feb. 20	Vicar of St. Anne Catholic Church in Debrecen launched a public donation and support for newcomers from Romania
Feb. 25	Spokesman of the government gives information how the government is managing the affairs of Romanian citizens residing in Hungary in growing numbers, the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) is established by the government decision
March	Protection seekers from Sri Lanka in Hungary (received by the Hungarian Red Cross) Agreement was concluded between the Hungarian Red Cross and Bajcsy-Zs. Association how to co-operate in support of newcomers from Romania

1988, March 6	3 rd meeting of the Hungarian Democratic Forum discussion on minorities and it urged to insert a closure on kin-state responsibility and solidarity towards kin-minorities living across the border to the reformed Constitution of Hungary
March 10	First meeting of IMC is held with the participation of the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Public Office for Wages and Labour Affairs, the National Council of the „Hazafias Népfront” (Patriot People’s Front), and the Red Cross. The head of the newly established committee is dr. Gál, Z. deputy Minister of Internal Affairs.
March 14	Prime Minister statement: due to 10,000 newcomers from Romania the government is seeking a proper administrative, managing method in support
March 17	Hungarian Red Cross is requested by the IMC to coordinate the private and civic donations for Romanian citizens residing in Hungary, the support office is established
March 18	The Parliament passed a proposal on budget covering on support to Romanian citizens residing in Hungary, the Settlement Fund is established
March 18	Since January 369 Romanian citizens claimed temporary residence permit in Debrecen, from them 69 persons were coming without documents but only 12 persons were refused and send back to Romania
March 21	Letter of the Peace Community Congregation (Németh, Géza) to the chair of the IMC: there is a growing rate of unqualified, undocumented, suspicious persons among newcomers from Romania, beyond the civil and church supports, there is need for a better organised security screening.
March 24	The County Co-ordination Committees (CCC) under the aegis of the IMC started own operation supporting Romanian citizens in settling and residing – shelters were opened in Debrecen, Pócstelek,
March 29	Metropolitan Council opened a supporting office together with the Police and Hungarian Red Cross for Romanian citizens (Tanács krt.28.) Meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw Pact in Sophia.

1988, April 1	Ethnic Romanians residing in Hungary are estimated as 17,000 mainly in Budapest, and Romania Libera was representing and managing their movement to West – by the Free Europe Radio
April 3	From this day on in Romania, names of towns and other (geographical) places can be used officially and in the media only in Romanian
April 4	Protocol of civil (opposite) meeting in Szilasliget openly forced to raise the family unification of split refugee families from Romania at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) meeting held in Vienna; to stop refusal of refugee to Romania; to manage housing for refugees.
April 7	Deputy Minister of the Interior giving an interview: number of applicants for settlement in Hungary was submitted from Romania in 1985–1987 was 11,492 but this procedure provides permits about 4,000 Romanian citizens; number of lawfully entered as tourists it was 900,000 persons in 1987 and in early 1988 it was 126,000 persons from Romania, and certain parts of them rejected to return – for them in the first 3 months of 1988 the police issued 1,800 temporary residence permits.
April 12	Students of Debrecen University (Faculty of Philology) requires more transparency and publicity on refugee issues avoiding paranoia and misleading news on growth of informers, felons among newcomers; communication experts are required to delegate to the IMC and CCC
April 14	First circular letter on management of temporary residing Romanian citizens by the IMC
April 20	Ambassador Erdős André states in the (CSCE) meeting in Vienna that minority issues could not be considered as internal affairs and kin-minority affairs deeply were influencing on bilateral relations between Hungary and Romania. He urged democratic solution for tensions.
April 28	Left-centrist Group at Debrecen University are managing relief actions in kind and mentally for refugees, it makes a survey on sociological background of refugees

1988, April 29	Ceaușescu declares that in the frame of the program of reforming the structure of settlements, the number of Romanian villages would be reduced from 13,000 to 5–6 000 (systematization)
May 15	The number of issued temporary residence permits for Romanian citizens was 3,700
May 22–23	Party Congress of HSWP elects president Kádár J., his successor as the new secretary general of the party is Grósz, K.
May 26	Witnesses and victims of refusal to Romania: beating and torture by the Romanian border guards, launched criminal procedure for illegal border crossing in March 1988 was approved. The imprisoned female got away and came to Hungary living in a shelter.
June 8	The Association of the Hungarian Architects is the first to issue a declaration protesting against the plan of demolishing Hungarian villages in Romania. During June, other organizations are protesting as well, such as the National Council of Trade Unions (SZOT), the Association of Young Communists (KISZ), the Hungarian Academy of Science, the National Peace Council and the representatives of the Hungarian churches.
June 27	More than fifty thousand people demonstrating on the Heroes' Square in Budapest against demolishing villages in Romania. The Romanian Embassy refuses to take over the letter of protest drafted by the civic organizers of the demonstration.
June 28	In response to the Hungarian demonstration against the Romanian „settlement re-structuralization”, the Hungarian Consulate General in Cluj-Napoca, Romania is closed down.
June 28	The fact that 6,178 Romanian citizens requested residence permit from the Hungarian authorities is officially published. The Parliament set up the Settlement Fund for their support and the government adopts a decree on its implementation.
Aug. 22–23	Sit-down strike with the participation of young people, mainly university students protesting against the Romanian village-destruction in front of the Romanian Embassy in Budapest.

1988, Aug. 28	Romanian-Hungarian summit meeting of Grósz K. Prime Minister with the secretary-general of the Romanian Communist Party Ceaușescu in Oradea without results.
Aug. 30	Spokesman of the HSWP announces that the Romanian leaders accepted the suggestion for holding an exchange of views at the highest level in 1989, and that at this forum a common declaration concerning the ethnic issues is drafted. The Romanian party is willing to widen the economic co-operation and to organize a new meeting for the cultural joint committee. A joint body will examine the situation of the Romanian citizens residing in Hungary.
Aug. 31	Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Association's petition to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament requiring to stop village destroying in Romania at international stage and how to receive refugees
Sept. 7–8	Grósz, K. addresses in writing the conference on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) held in Milan. Hungary is represented by Kovács, L. deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He announces that Hungary wishes to join the Protocol of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
Sept.13	In a letter addressed to the UN, Grósz, K. proposes to include also in an international agreement the protection of national minorities and the right to preserve national cultures, as the Human Rights Declaration does not explicitly mentions these rights. Horn, Gy. state secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivers a speech in Vienna at the plenary session of the follow-up meeting of the CSCE.
Sept. 20–22	Szűrös, M. secretary of the Central Committee of HSWP pays a visit to Romania meeting with Ion Stoian, substitute member of the Political Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and secretary general of the Central Committee. Nicolae Ceaușescu also receives him.
Sept. 23–8 Oct.	Várkonyi, P. Minister of Foreign Affairs participates on the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly. He delivers a speech at the General Assembly.

1988, Sept.25	12 ethnic Hungarians from Romania request asylum at the Hungarian Embassy in Sophia.
Sept.30	The Hungarian Catholic Episcopal Conference requests the European Parliament to take the issue of Romanian village-restructuring plans on the agenda of its following meeting.
Oct. 24	Hungary is the first country within the Central-Eastern European block to allow for the UN Human Rights Committee to launch an investigation within the country if it is necessary.
Oct. 27	Pozsgay, I. as state secretary giving interview to <i>Népszabadság</i> : shutters at the state borders have to be ceased for political and financial reasons.
Oct. 28–29	Conference of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the member states of the Warsaw Pact in Budapest.
Nov. 8–9	Várkonyi, P. Minister of Foreign Affairs attends in Vienna the follow-up meeting of the CSCE, he delivers a speech on 8th November in the plenary session.
Nov. 15	Memorial demonstration of 1 st anniversary of uprising in Brasov organised by civil organisations. It was forcibly dissolved by the police.
Nov. 25	The Parliament elects Németh, M. as prime minister. Grósz, K. remains the secretary general of the party.
Nov. 26	Following the constituting “ <i>persona non grata</i> ” of the Hungarian commercial counsellor in Bucharest, the counsellor general of the Romanian Embassy is labelled the same.
Dec. 22	Following the report of Szűrös, M. general secretary of the Central Committee of the HSWP, president of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, on the message of Pope John Paul II concerning ethnic minorities, the Parliament delivers a position on the papal message.

1989, Jan. 6	The Alliance of the Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and the Menedék Committee publishes a declaration concerning the issue of the Transylvanian refugees, urging that Hungary should receive everybody without discrimination. It is also suggested that Hungary join the 1951 Geneva Convention and thus open the possibility for the operation of a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office.
Jan. 16	A press conference is organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the reconsideration of the relations of Hungary to ratified international conventions in the framework of the UN, and about the establishment and improvement of the co-operation with the international organisations working in the field of human rights.
Jan. 16–19	Várkonyi, P. Minister of Foreign Affairs attends in Vienna the final meeting of the follow-up meeting of the CSCE. His speech on 18th at the final meeting of the plenary he stresses that the Hungarian government would like to include the recognition of the collective rights of the ethnic minorities into the final document.
Jan. 26–27	Horn, Gy. secretary of state for foreign affairs attends and gives a speech at the meeting of the UN Human Rights Committee.
Feb. 6–11	Upon the invitation of the IMC, the Investigating Committee of the UNHCR arrives to Hungary in order to examine the situation of the refugees coming from Romania.
Feb. 17	12 asylum seekers from Romania from the Hungarian Embassy (Sophia) arrive by a plane of an Austrian Airline in Hungary through Vienna.
Feb. 23	The government adopts a proposal on the situation of the Romania citizens residing and resettling in Hungary, and submits it to the Parliament.
Feb. 24	On the base of the governmental proposal, the Presidential Council takes a decision on the accession of Hungary to the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol.
Feb. 27	Horn, Gy. state secretary of Foreign Affairs delivers a speech at the meeting of the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva.

1989, Feb. 28	The removal of the electric border is decided by the Political Committee of the Central Committee of the HSWP.
March 3	Together with six other states (Australia, Austria, France, Great-Britain, Portugal and Sweden), the Hungary officially requests the UN to launch an investigation through its Human Rights Committee concerning the emergence of human rights in Romania.
March 10	Hungary submits its request to the full membership (including voting rights) at the UN Human Rights Committee.
March 12	The European Parliament condemns Romania in a resolution for the violation of human rights. The resolution welcomes the Belgian initiative aiming at the “adoption of the villages”.
March 15–22	The UN delegation pays a visit to Hungary in order to define the details of financial and technical support. Apart from staff of the relevant ministries, the four members of the delegation meet also the representatives of the protestant and catholic church as well as the Hungarian Red Cross. They also visit the future possible reception centres (refugee camps).
March 17	The spokesman of the UNHCR announces in Geneva that on 14 March Hungary joined the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol as the 106th member state, but as the first one from the Central-Eastern European block.
March 22	Roundtable negotiations between the ruling power (HSWP) and political opponents are formally launched.
April 6	Under the presidency of Pozsgay, I. minister without portfolio, the government establishes an ethnic secretariat aiming at the co-ordination of the governmental tasks concerning the ethnic minorities living in Hungary and at the monitoring of the situation of Hungarian ethnic groups living outside of the borders of Hungary.
April 25–27	Consultation on human rights issues in Kijev held by the socialist countries with the exception of Romania.
May 2	Director of the HQ of the Border Guards, Nováky B. on an international press conference in Hegyeshalom states that removal of iron curtain has been launched at the Austro-Hungarian border.

1989, May 19	Establishment of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee
June 12	The 1951 Geneva Convention enters into force in Hungary. The 1967 Protocol had already been in force since 14th March.
June 12–16	UNHCR delegation prepared further support agreement in the Ministry of the Interior mainly to contribute to the costs of reception centre and health care of refugees
July 1	The government decree on reception centres (refugee camps) enters into force. Those operation and services managed inside are financed from the Settlement Fund.
Aug. 8	The Chief Public Prosecutor issues circular letter (order) to public prosecutor offices what to do in case of illegal border crossing: instead of expulsion or deportation the individual conditions shall be evaluated through his/her warning or launching a trial against migrant in Hungary if it is well founded. The ambassador of DDR protests for this erosion of bilateral agreement but the Prime Minister instructs the Ministers (Interior and Foreign Affairs) to prepare the method of opening borders and free leaving the country (for citizens of DDR)
Aug. 10	Number of diplomatic asylum seekers in the German Embassy in Budapest is 117, and due to unbearable conditions in the Embassy its closure is decided. The Government requests the Hungarian Red Cross to manage free leaving of DDR citizens from the Embassy issuing humanitarian documents for them.
Aug. 19	Pan-European Movement's Picnic is held at the Austro-Hungarian border (Sopronpuszta) and about 600 DDR citizens can leave without obstacles to Austria. This meeting of Hungarian, Austrian and West-German politicians is followed by great attention of the international press.
Aug. 23	DDR citizens from the German Embassy furnished with Red Cross documents travel by air to Germany via Vienna.
Aug. 30	The Official Gazette (<i>Magyar Közlöny</i>) published the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol in the Law Decree No.15

1989, Aug. 31	Foreign Minister Horn visit in Berlin announcing that Hungary suspends the implementation of bilateral agreement with DDR on deportation of overstaying citizens. Due to ratification of the 1951 Geneva Convention this agreement is not applicable. Agents of STASI are allowed to convince DDR citizens residing in Hungary on return.
July 1	Gorbachev, M. mentions the importance of ethnic issues in his speech on television and radio.
July 7	On the summit of the Warsaw Pact, Gorbachev recognizes that member states are free to follow the way they choose for themselves.
Aug. 25	Prime Minister Németh, M. and Horn, Gy., Minister of Foreign Affairs enters into negotiations in East-Germany concerning the DDR citizens residing in Hungary.
Sept.1	The Hungarian ambassador in Geneva hands over the draft agreement concerning the Hungarian refugee strategy to J.P. Hocke, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
Sept. 2	The Central Committee of HSWP discussed how to cope the growing mass of DDR citizens residing in the country. "It is categorically refused that Hungary would become a refugee camp". Decision to solve soon the conflict is adopted.
Sept. 8	According to government's decision on opening the border crossing at Austro-Hungarian border for DDR citizens the top leaders in Berlin and Bonn are officially informed on forthcoming event.
Sept. 10	The Foreign Minister Horn announces in a central shelter that since midnight DDR citizens can freely leave the country towards Austria. It is broadcast in TV online. Thousands are leaving within hours and days.
Oct. 4	Gál, Z. state secretary of Ministry of the Interior signs the Agreement on Seat and a further Support concluded between the Hungarian Government and the UNHCR. The support of UNHCR means 4.9 million USD to the reception of refugees.
Oct. 7	The HSWP is officially dismissed. It is replaced as its successor by the Hungarian Socialist Party.

1989, Oct. 15	The government decree on asylum procedure enters into force. The first instance decisions are made by the local units of the Refugee Office (Ministry of the Interior) located at police or reception centres, the second instance (appeal) is decided by the Refugee Office. The legal status of recognized refugees is regulated by Law-Decree No.19 entering into force on the same day. The applicants on the ground of non-European reasons belong to the UNHCR directly.
Oct. 17	The Office of the UNHCR starts operating in Budapest. The Office provides the protection of asylum seekers and refugees due to non-European reasons of well-established fear of persecution. The Office's building is provided by the government.
Oct. 23	Declaration of Republic of Hungary replacing the People's Republic, the comprehensive reform of Constitution is adopted (Act XXXI of 1989) by the Parliament on the base of National Roundtable Negotiations, and it enters into force.
Nov. 8	Through diplomatic channels, Hungary is protesting at the Romanian government against the atrocities against Tőkés, L. Hungarian protestant priest in Timisoara.
Nov. 9	Berlin Wall is opened, the leaders of DDR open up the borders in Berlin
Dec. 16–19	Demonstrations are started in the neighbourhood of the protestant church in Timisoara. People – including Romanians – march in front of the apartment of Tőkés, L. but they are unable to stop his eviction and arrest. The demonstration is dismissed, some demonstrators are fired. The borders are closed down towards Hungary and Yugoslavia.
Dec. 17–25	An uprising breaks out in Bucharest. On 22nd December, the presidential palace is in the state of siege, and on 25th December, Ceaușescu and his wife are executed by the army.
Dec. 25	New government is formed in Romania. Following it, the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a declaration on the reconsideration and reforming of the Hungarian-Romanian relations.
