

Geographical aspects of the impact of the economic development support provided by Hungary in the Vojvodina region of Serbia

One of the key tasks of the National Strategy of the Government of Hungary is to support the economic development of Hungarian communities abroad from 2015, in addition to the previous cultural and educational subsidies. The support of the Hungarians of Vojvodina started between 2015-2018, which was followed by the 2018-2022 support period, but the same process started in the direction of the Hungarian communities of the other states neighboring Hungary, in addition to Serbia, in Romania. In Slovakia, in the Hungarian-inhabited areas of Croatia and Slovenia, and in Ukraine. The outline of the support system started on the basis of development strategies based on the economic needs of the region, but it was implemented differently everywhere, depending on the receptivity of the neighboring country in question. In many cases, the success of the implementation and its implementation depended on the central institutions of the states, and it was also slowed down in one state.

A significant part of the support focused on the development of agricultural, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The under-planning of resource allocation pointed to strong application activity. According to Körmöczi, the concentration of applications was observed in the area of the Hungarians and in the environment of the more developed urban areas (Körmöczi, 2020).

In June 2020, the amount of subsidies reached HUF 129 billion. In this way, the 55,000 cross-border enterprises made investments worth HUF 236 billion in the first few years (MTI: 16 June 2020).

In addition to the economic subsidies, in addition to the domestic subsidies, the Hungarian subsidies can be used to support the activities of students studying at different levels of education, cultural life, non-governmental organizations and churches through the Hungarian National Council.

This special form of the Vojvodina support system, which originated in the mainland, covered the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in Serbia, which is a NUTS 2 region in the process of EU pre-accession. The support was available to and applied for by citizens of this region living in Serbia who have both Hungarian and Serbian citizenship. In the first cycle, a total of HUF 70 billion, at the then exchange rate of EUR 160 million, and in the second cycle, approximately the same amount of support was available, but the structure of the deductible-loan portion changed. Grants were awarded for the purchase of village houses, the purchase of arable land, small-scale agricultural development, large- and medium-scale development, the acquisition and standardization of equipment by companies, and support for start-ups and tourism projects.

The territorial disproportion of the subsidies of the Hungarian communities and the differences in the concentration of the subsidies were determined by the territorial distribution and the numerical concentration of the Hungarian community in Vojvodina.

At the bottom of Figure 1 below, 4 aid intensity areas can be outlined: the area covering the block Hungarians covers the cadastral areas of the settlements of the Bajmok-Subotica-Novi Kneževac-Bečej triangle; this is followed by the scattering of the Western Bačka area settlements; the areas of the scattered settlements in South Bačka, as well as the villages of Central Banat and the settlements of the scattered Hungarians (South Banat and Srem).

In addition to the national economic development subsidies, the number and diversity of small and medium-sized enterprises is gradually increasing due to the economic development

subsidies in Hungary. Black companies have been able to gain official registration and the proportion of innovative companies has increased, while large companies have been able to make more profits by exporting across borders with new technologies. This innovative production development is reflected in the pharmaceutical industry, honey processing, the bicycle industry, fruit processing, pig farming, and even in certain sectors of metal processing. It can be said, then, that a vigorous growing generation emerges in the course of subsidies, which hopes to create its future here and is able to realize a high level of technology and thus exports. Territorially, this means that in addition to Srem and some villages, there are young Hungarian professionals, farmers, business informatics and metal processing professionals who want to stay in most of Vojvodina (Nagy, 2020). This finding is supported by the interest in start-ups, which is driving an innovative and knowledge-based economy.

Most of the Hungarian minorities in Vojvodina lives in villages, is engaged in agriculture, many of whom are large farmers and who cultivate a significant amount of land. Many of the young people who are farm survivors are skilled in agriculture. Based on the conversation with the students of the Faculty of the Hungarian Agricultural University from Gödöllő, operating in Serbian town Senta, it could be stated that the need for more diverse practical knowledge was the driving force for their enrollment. Most of the young farmers living here envision their future here, in the village, with the help of Serbian national, Hungarian state subsidies and EU-IPPARD support. In addition to developed economies and good yields, the knowledge-based economy and innovation, the lack of a diversified product structure, and the low level of rural community life and quality of life are still problems. Emigration from rural settlements is more common than staying there, so it seems important to increase the number of people buying a house in the village and imagining their life in the village, which is supported by the Hungarian Government in the case of Hungarian communities.

The acquisition of economic assets (mainly agricultural assets) has significantly increased productivity in Serbia, as it has had an impact on the whole country, which can be substantiated by the territorial distribution of suppliers. The majority of suppliers are concentrated in Vojvodina, but there are also a significant number of suppliers in the Belgrade area and in central and southern Serbia.

In addition to economic development support, mention should also be made of support for cultural, educational and cultural life, which was previously known and preceded economic development support. In support of educational life, the support of educational and church institutions in particular is outstanding. but investments for the renovation of monuments and monuments are e.g. the completion of the synagogue in Subotica, the trilingual (Serbian, Hungarian, Croatian) theater in Subotica, and the completion of the renovation of St. Teresa's Cathedral are exemplary. The grants provide a wide range of training, skills development and preparation programs for students, adults and disadvantaged students, but the diversity of the structure and nature of these grants provides opportunities for young people and adults alike. In this way, the micro-regional identity and the whole range of activities aimed at preserving the tradition are expressed, which are the proofs of the identity consciousness of the Hungarian population living here, even in the communities with the smallest population.

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