



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FACT SHEETS ON HUNGARY

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HUNGARY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

A historical mission

Much is spoken of the roots, values, development and achievements of European integration on this, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. Hungary is concerned both passively and actively in this dialogue which, occasionally, precipitates into polemic. Passively inasmuch as for decades the country could only stand by and watch as an outside observer the voluntary integration taking place in the more fortunate half of the continent. (We shouldn't forget that a form of integration also occurred on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, although here it was neither voluntary nor democratic.) Nonetheless, the desire for association with the West existed, but this aspiration had to be kept hidden right up until the end of the 1980s, although Hungary was the first eastern bloc country to establish an embryonic

system of contacts with integration organizations of the West. The first sectoral arrangements (on steel, textiles and livestock) were set down in a comprehensive agreement on commerce and commercial and economic cooperation in 1988. This formed the basis for the further development of relations between the European Community and Hungary. Barely one year later, political events in Hungary led to a fundamental transformation in the system of relations of the country.

1989 was a turning point for Hungary in three respects. The change of system became irreversible, and preparations for the first free elections in March 1990 began to gather pace. Parallel with this, consensus gradually began to be established among the different political forces about Hungary's eventual full membership of the Western European organizations of integration. And

thirdly, Hungary played a role in launching changes that shook Europe (and indeed the world) because it was actively involved in the peaceful but determined change of political system, and through this the winding up of the eastern bloc. By "releasing" East German refugees on 11 September 1989, Budapest removed the first brick from the Berlin Wall that had been hermetically sealed since 1961. The fracture that Hungary inflicted on this dreaded symbol of a divided Europe and global confrontation made, as it transpired a few months later, a decisive contribution to the unification of Germany and, later, of the whole of Europe.

From 1989–1990, Hungary moved into the mainstream of European history; the signing in December 1991 of the Association Agreement was the official declaration of its aspirations to join the EU. In June 1993, the European Union in effect

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Hungary at a glance



Hungary was established as an independent state in the heart of Europe over one thousand years ago. Founder of the state King St. Stephen, who was crowned king in A.D. 1000, consciously set about building close ties with Christian Europe. As a member of the European Union from 1 May 2004, Hungary is already an inseparable, integral part of the political, economic and cultural community of our continent.

Area: 93,000 km²
Population: 10,162,000 (2002)
Length of border: 2243 km
Neighbouring countries: Austria, Slovakia,
Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia,
Slovenia
Official language: Hungarian
State form: republic

Currency: Forint (HUF)
GDP: €6876 per capita (2002)
Capital: Budapest (pop.: 1,800,000)
Major towns: Debrecen (pop.: 211,000),
Miskolc (185,000), Szeged (160,000), Pécs
(162,000), Győr (130,000)



opened the way to a fifth, so-called “eastwards” expansion. As a result of a somewhat more protracted process than originally expected and through its perseverance and consistent policies, the Republic of Hungary was admitted as a full member of the European Union on 1 May 2004. From this date Hungary has been involved in actively shaping the EU’s current and future policy, and it bears responsibility not only for its own citizens and Hungarians living beyond the borders, but also for the whole institutional community. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, when thinking of the past, present and future of European integration it is not possible to ignore the situation, role and responsibility of Hungary, either.

The past that is still with us

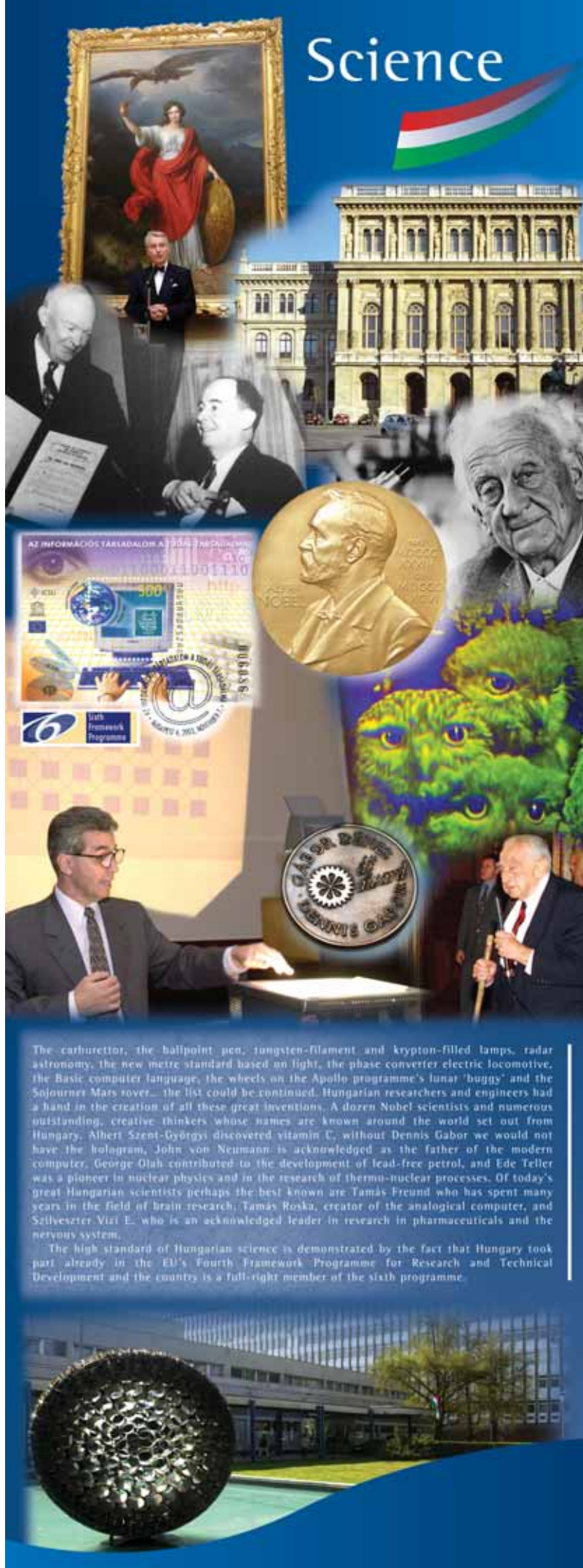
One can quite often hear people comment that Europe and the European Union are in crisis, and the failure of the European Constitution in 2005 is a sign of doubts about European integration. Unquestionably, opinions differ on the assessment of past achievements, and there are divergent views on the future direction of EU development. It is not uncommon to hear that the current state of affairs is largely a result of “borderless”, “over-reached”, “overhasty” and “uncontrolled” enlargement.

Hungary disputes this approach, and indeed intends to prove the unfounded nature of the assertion by emphasizing that

the 2004 enlargement is the crowning achievement of the principles declared fifty years ago. What better indicator could there be of the success of this historical enterprise launched by the founding fathers than the fact that the ending of ideological, political and military confrontation took place peacefully in Europe. It is also worth remembering that the countries, the peoples, the nearly 100 million inhabitants locked behind the Iron Curtain for four decades accepted considerable sacrifices in order to gradually draw closer to the community of nations operating peacefully and freely.

It is Hungary's firm conviction that the EU with 12 new members has become not weaker but rather far stronger: its market has expanded considerably, its competitiveness has improved, and it has become more secure. It is important to recognize that after enlargement, respect for the EU continued to grow, its values are now represented in many more countries, and its words are listened to with greater regard around the world.

The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was adopted just six weeks after the 1 May 2004 round of enlargement, although it has not entered into force as a result of negative referendums in two Member States a year later. At the same time, decisions on the 2007–2013 budget, service guidelines for the internal market, new regulations on chemical substances (REACH) etc. were passed with the participation of the new Member States.



The cathartector, the ballpoint pen, tungsten-filament and krypton-filled lamps, radar astronomy, the new metre standard based on light, the phase converter electric locomotive, the Basic computer language, the wheels on the Apollo programme's lunar 'buggy' and the Sojourner Mars rover... the list could be continued. Hungarian researchers and engineers had a hand in the creation of all these great inventions. A dozen Nobel scientists and numerous outstanding, creative thinkers whose names are known around the world set out from Hungary. Albert Szent-Györgyi discovered vitamin C; without Dennis Gabor we would not have the hologram; John von Neumann is acknowledged as the father of the modern computer; George Olah contributed to the development of lead-free petrol; and Ede Teller was a pioneer in nuclear physics and in the research of thermonuclear processes. Of today's great Hungarian scientists perhaps the best known are Tamás Freund who has spent many years in the field of brain research; Tamás Roska, creator of the analogical computer; and Szilveszter Vizi E. who is an acknowledged leader in research in pharmaceuticals and the nervous system.

The high standard of Hungarian science is demonstrated by the fact that Hungary took part already in the EU's Fourth Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development and the country is a full-right member of the sixth programme.

Innovation



The Rubik's Cube, named after its inventor Ernő Rubik, has become a symbol of Hungarian creativity. These days, numerous global corporations have chosen Hungary as the base for their production units and R&D facilities because of the country's trained workforce and motivated, highly professional managers. Indeed, many of the leading-edge products of tomorrow developed by, for instance, Nokia, Ericsson, Siemens, General Electric, Knorr Bremse and Samsung are born in research centres based in Hungary. Among Hungarian companies the pharmaceuticals giant Richter Gedeon devotes particularly large sums to research, even by international standards. Graphisoft®, founded in 1982, is one of the leading global software development companies in the field of architectural, machinery design and project management programs. The highly successful data recovery service developed by Kúrt Computer Inc. has turned the company into one of the foremost data protection and recovery enterprises in Europe.

The excellence of Hungary's educational system, its distinguished secondary schools and universities, is the guarantee of a continual supply of innovative and creative people. Hungarian students have garnered several gold medals at international chemistry, physics and mathematics "olympics". During the EU Young Scientist Competition in 2003 Gábor Németh walked away with first prize and Manuela Lukács was presented with an EU special award. In a competition sponsored by NASA, grammar school student Bernadett Gal recommended the very landing spot on Mars for the Spirit rover that American scientists also finally decided on. And while on this topic, Dávid Turczi was invited to the American space centre in Pasadena to take part in planning the route of the Mars rover.



What is more, much else has been achieved in the recent past.

Thus Hungary, together with nine other new Member States, joined the European Union on 1 May 2004. Everything went smoothly, and furthermore Romania and Bulgaria have, as fully-fledged members of the EU, been involved in the integration since 1 January 2007 in the fifth round of enlargement. Naturally this does not mean that – following the 2004–2007 enlargements – Europe has attained a state of grace. One historical period has closed, and a new one has immediately opened: this is now the age of the Europe of 27.

The achievements and the lessons of Hungary's accession

Leading politicians of the old Member States frequently hailed the enlargement “eastwards” as a process that was carried out at breathtaking speed. This could give rise to the assumption, in fact mistaken, that enlargement was rushed and concluded rashly. This is absolutely not the case, because if we turn back the clock we will see that the integration of the former socialist bloc actually started in 1989–1990. Political and economic reforms, the formation of parliamentary democracy and a competitive market economy on the one hand served the conversion to the Western political and economic system and compatibility with the systems operative there, and on the other hand gradual convergence and harmonization of the legal,



admission to the EU at roughly the same time.

Extremely thorough groundwork was called for in order for both the new recruits and the receiving states to be ready for the greatest enlargement in the history of the EU (the so-called “big bang”). By 1 May 2004, many still held the view that preparations were not fully complete. However, the years since have shown that the fears about enlargement were unfounded, nor are today’s doubters able to pin the blame for the current difficulties on the accession treaty. Overall, the everyday life of the EU continued on its usual course on 2 May 2004. The internal market continued to function as before. Goods, services and capital moved freely, at least to the degree specified in valid treaties, while more than a half of the Member States cancelled the transitional 2+3+2-year regime established for the movement of labour after the first two years once they recognized that the labour force arriving from the new Member States did not represent a problem but rather gave them a competitive edge. The insecurity of citizens of the old Member States did not increase, indeed the majority of European food scandals were actually in the opposite direction, that is unregulated foodstuffs originating from the territories of the old Member States found their way onto the shelves of shops in the new Member States. Nor did the fear that the arrival of the new members would paralyse or at least bring to a near halt decision-mak-

ing in the EU prove well founded. On the contrary, one can see and experience that the EU-27 is fully functional.

Another concern that has not been borne out in practice is that the provision of pre-accession funds to new Member States, among them Hungary, and then after membership the expansion of common policies, would be some sort of “aid policy” akin to pouring money down the drain. The theory that the new Member States lacked the necessary absorption capacity has also been disproved. Hungary accepts that the application of EU grants must be completely transparent because every citizen of the old Member States has a right to know exactly where financing is going in the new Member States, since it is partly his taxes that are involved in the transfer.

In the early years EU pre-accession support went primarily on modernizing, democratizing and stabilizing the political and economic legal and institutional systems. Later, these grants were directed more towards establishing and developing the legal and administrative means for the practical application of the *acquis communautaire*. The interests of the old Member States are directly and indirectly served by compliance with EU norms i.e. the acceptance and implementation of the common legal and regulatory system. If, for instance, the norms applied in Hungary to the issues of environmental protection, border controls and food safety are identical to those in the other EU states, and the institu-

tions and apparatuses for the enforcement of these laws are set up, then this increases the security of every citizen of the European Union. As a result of the successful convergence of the new Member States, the single internal market is expanded and companies have access to new markets: in short, the common European economy is strengthened. Operating via the infrastructure being built in the new Member States, a very high proportion of enterprises in the old Member States gain direct, faster access to new markets.

Of course, the new Member States are the greatest beneficiaries of membership, but not merely because of the financial resources. From the very start Hungary consistently adhered to its objective of attaining full membership, part of which includes the acceptance and realization of common values. Furthermore, construction of a – initially functional, then competitive – market economy was achieved. Besides this, membership also held out the attractive possibility that the country could play a direct part in formulating European policy. With Hungary a member of the EU, its citizens and enterprises compete on the internal market, and take part in education and training with basically the same opportunities and under the same conditions as their old Member State partners. Upon winning membership, the regions of Hungary and Hungary itself have also become beneficiaries of those existing and successful common policies pursued over





several decades, the aims of which are to close the gap with the less developed regions, to implement rural development and to link up the European infra-structural networks. The European Union has become bigger, stronger, more competitive and more secure through enlargement.

Membership of the European Union raised dilemmas in Hungary, too. Many were worried that the country would have to give up the independence and sovereignty it regained with the change of regime. Of course this was not the case. EU Member States do not cease to exist as sovereign states. Instead, it is rather that certain spheres of authority are no longer exercised singly, independently, but instead jointly with the other Member States. Despite the supposed disadvantages, the EU actually represents great opportunities for Hungary and similar small- and medium-size Member States. Nor have the traditions and specific traits of the Member States had to be sacrificed. For instance, the tradition in Hungary of smallholder pig-killing can continue, although it is true that such meat may not be introduced onto the market. We can still consume poppy seeds, it is just that their production and trade have to be monitored. And milk with 2.8% fat content is also with us.

Hungary takes part in the EU's decision-making mechanisms and bodies as a Member State with equal rights. Hungarian representatives are among the most active in the European

Parliament, they regularly receive rapporteur or senior posts on committees and within political families. Hungary is constantly active and engaged in the work of the Council and in the formation of ad-hoc coalitions. A Hungarian member sits on the European Commission, and several hundred Hungarian officials are involved in the development and monitoring of policies in the European Commission as well as in numerous other EU institutions. Naturally, everyone conducts work according to their own mandate: some represent their constituencies, some are commissioned by the Budapest government, and there are others working in the EU bodies representing the interests of the union.

So to sum up, it is possible to state that following its accession on 1 May 2004, Hungary has made a contribution – through its considerable economic, scientific and cultural resources – to the enlargement of the union, while it has also received the benefits of integration. Countless ties bind Hungary and the EU together, which is why the main thing we have learned over the past three years is that what is bad for Europe cannot be good for Hungary, and vice versa: what is good for Europe is certainly also good for Hungary. Our fates are inseparably intertwined.

Quo vadis Europe?

At the moment the European Union faces two fundamental challenges. One is globalization. The other problematic area

encompasses long-standing conflicts, sometimes smouldering beneath the surface, at other times breaking out into open conflagration: the diversity of viewpoints on the development model for future European integration, and the friction between these approaches. Europe cannot avoid being impacted by globalization. The challenge of competition from overseas or from the countries of Asia, the question of migration, recurring energy crises, terrorism that recognizes no borders, or even bird flu are issues that did not originate in Europe and yet these new phenomena do pose a threat to Europe. The EU-27 can, in every respect, take more effective measures against these challenges than the EU-15.

At the same time, it is obvious that the EU-27 is a far more heterogeneous organization than the EU-15. There can be no doubt that the loss of homogeneity may result in internal tension from both budgetary and institutional aspects. However, internal conflicts are not a natural concomitant of such problems. Enlargement has not forced the old Member States to pick up an intolerable burden. In fact, the new Member States are critical of the fact that today the EU-27 spends proportionately less on far more common tasks and policies than the EU-15 did 10-15 years ago. Solidarity, cohesion is not a mere charitable policy; the convergence of the less developed regions strengthens the competitiveness of the EU as a whole, and generates new jobs



Literature



SÁNDOR MÁRAI (1900-1989)

"They speak softly yet they understand each other; warmth of the wood-panelled walls echoes even the soft-spoken words. As the wooden body of an instrument echoes its strings."

15th century Renaissance ruler King Matthias owns one of the largest libraries of the age, with over 2000 bound "Corvinas". (The word Corvina comes from the Latin for raven, the bird featuring on the royal coat of arms which was painted on each binding.) Over the centuries Hungarian art and European literature and culture have enjoyed close relationship which has proven mutual beneficial and stimulating.

Approximately 500 Hungarian novels and collections of verse have been translated in the last fifty years alone. Sándor Márai's *Embers* has proven to be a world hit, and at the last count it was available in 24 languages. So far the work *Fateless* by Imre Kertész – winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature 2002 – has been translated into 20 languages and it will shortly be available in a further five. Aside from Imre Kertész, other leading Hungarian writers also top foreign bestseller lists including Péter Esterházy (Herder Prize 2002, Grinzane Cavour Literary Prize 2003), György Konrád (International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen 2001), Péter Nádas (Grand Prix at the Leipzig Book Fair 1995, Vilém Literary Award 1998) and Magda Szabó (Paris Prix Femina 2003).



MAGDA SZABÓ (1917)

"Everything I know about feelings and passion I learnt from my two mentors: Greek tragedy and the wind on the Great Hungarian Plain."

PÉTER ESTERHÁZY (1950)

"The grammatical terrain is myself."



The first Hungarian Nobel laureate of the 21st century and the first Hungarian to win the Nobel Prize for literature:

IMRE KERTÉSZ (1929)
"There can be nothing impossible that it cannot be lived through quite naturally."

across the entire European Union.

The strengthening of heterogeneity went together with the intensification of classical internal differences. The new Member States do not hold a unified position on the question of the future development of the EU. The majority quickly ratified the European Constitution and support further integration and strengthening the federal character of the union. On the other hand, others go along with the stance of a few of the old Member States according to which the speed of integration should be slowed. These are real differences of opinion, real problems, but by no stretch of the imagination can they be termed the fruit of enlargement. For certain, these issues need to be managed and resolved because marching on the spot can lead to stalled development and the weakening of integration. And this in turn could also lead to the danger of a crisis in European integration at exactly the moment when the desire of many millions of people for the creation of a united continent has been fulfilled.

Hungary's vision of the future for Europe

Hungary never viewed its own accession as an isolated event only concerning itself. Budapest defined its goals in joining the European integration to be: convergence with the process which has been going on for 50 years, consolidation of the achievements already made, and reinvig-

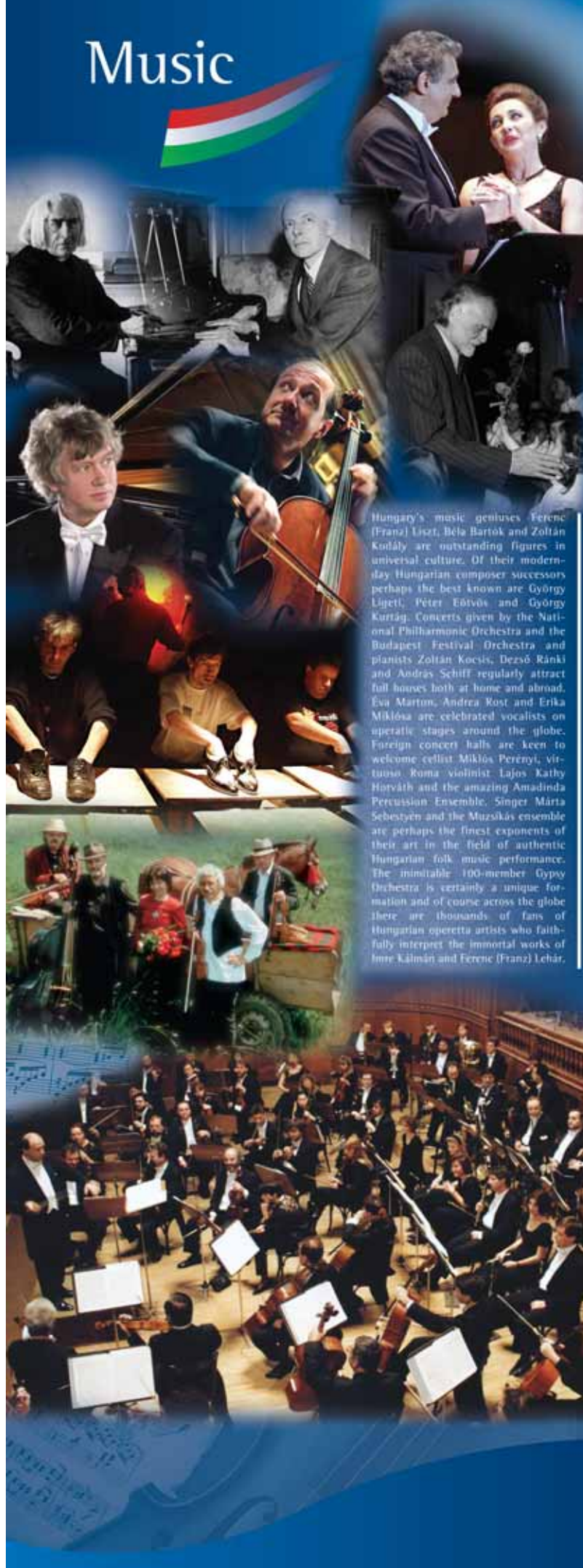
...és csak teheted, élj mindig a
...személybe fagyott remekműveimék egyiker mindennap
...napod, ha néhány pillanatra is! Ne million el egye
...vantes, Arisztotelész, a Szentírás, Rilke vagy Marcus Aure
...kényveiből. Mindennap hallgass néhány ütem zenét, ha
...kérp nem lehet, szólítsd meg a zenedobozon Bach,
...thoven, Gluck vagy Mozart valamely ríműs. Nem ill
...nsp, hogy nem nézegetni!

oration of the capacity to develop. In Hungary's eyes, the consolidation of achievements means regarding as a common value the results that have already been reached in European integration: the ending of centuries of confrontation, the elimination of wars on the continent, the creation of stable, democratic relations and competitive economic development. However, integration bearing fruit solely on one side of the continent could not be considered a success. The reunification of Europe, the fifth enlargement, was needed to make post-World War II Europe a success story. This is a historical fact on which we can all build when it comes to resolving current and future problems.

However much we would like to, we still cannot rest. There is no state of grace. Let us consider for a moment: in just 15 years the countries of Central-Eastern Europe had to make up for the arrears of five decades. The total transformation of the social and economic model created a huge shock. The strain was only heightened in the rush to comply with the internal regulations, legal and institutional systems of the European Union. The process of adjustment is still not closed; it will require further efforts from the new Member States. Moreover, sustainable development is a challenge that both old and new Member States have to face up to every single day.

This is why Hungary has an interest in maintaining the unity of the union. Following the historical reunification, Hungary

Music



Hungary's music geniuses Ferenc (Franz) Liszt, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály are outstanding figures in universal culture. Of their modern-day Hungarian composer successors perhaps the best known are György Ligeti, Péter Eötvös and György Kurtág. Concerts given by the National Philharmonic Orchestra and the Budapest Festival Orchestra and pianists Zoltán Kocsis, Dezső Ránki and András Schiff regularly attract full houses both at home and abroad. Éva Marton, Andrea Rost and Erika Miklósa are celebrated vocalists on operatic stages around the globe. Foreign concert halls are keen to welcome cellist Miklós Perényi, virtuoso Roma violinist Lajos Kathy Horváth and the amazing Amadinda Percussion Ensemble. Singer Márta Sebestyén and the Muzsikás ensemble are perhaps the finest exponents of their art in the field of authentic Hungarian folk music performance. The inimitable 100-member Gypsy Orchestra is certainly a unique formation and of course across the globe there are thousands of fans of Hungarian operetta artists who faithfully interpret the immortal works of Imre Kálmán and Ferenc (Franz) Lehár.

Sport



Despite its relatively small population Hungary ranks as one of the great sporting nations of the world. So far our sportsmen and women have taken 149 gold medals at Summer Olympic Games, placing Hungary 8th in the overall ranking worldwide. Boxer László Papp was crowned Olympic champion three times and the Hungarian National Anthem was played on five occasions at three Olympic Games in honour of swimmer Krisztina Egerszegi.

Disabled Hungarian sportsmen and women have claimed 22 gold, 26 silver and 35 bronze medals at the Paralympics. Fencer Pál Szekeres has racked up three Olympic titles.

The internationally acclaimed footballer phenomenon Ferenc Puskás is also one of Hungary's most famous sons. Although football is no longer a Hungarian success story, Hungarian fencers, kayakers, canoeists, swimmers, pentathletes and water polo players consistently finish among the top at international competitions. Among these sporting greats it is worth highlighting the achievements of 12-times world- and 7-times European champion kayaker Katalin Kovács.

does not back the EU electing to advance in small groups. And yet if this still proves unavoidable in a few areas, then it is essential to ensure that the Member States initially omitted from the given cooperation are permitted to converge as soon as possible with the support of those elements within the grouping. Hungary itself is striving to create the conditions necessary to join existing internal systems (Schengen, Euro zone), as well as the bases for convergence with newly created forms of cooperation (for instance, the Prum Convention).

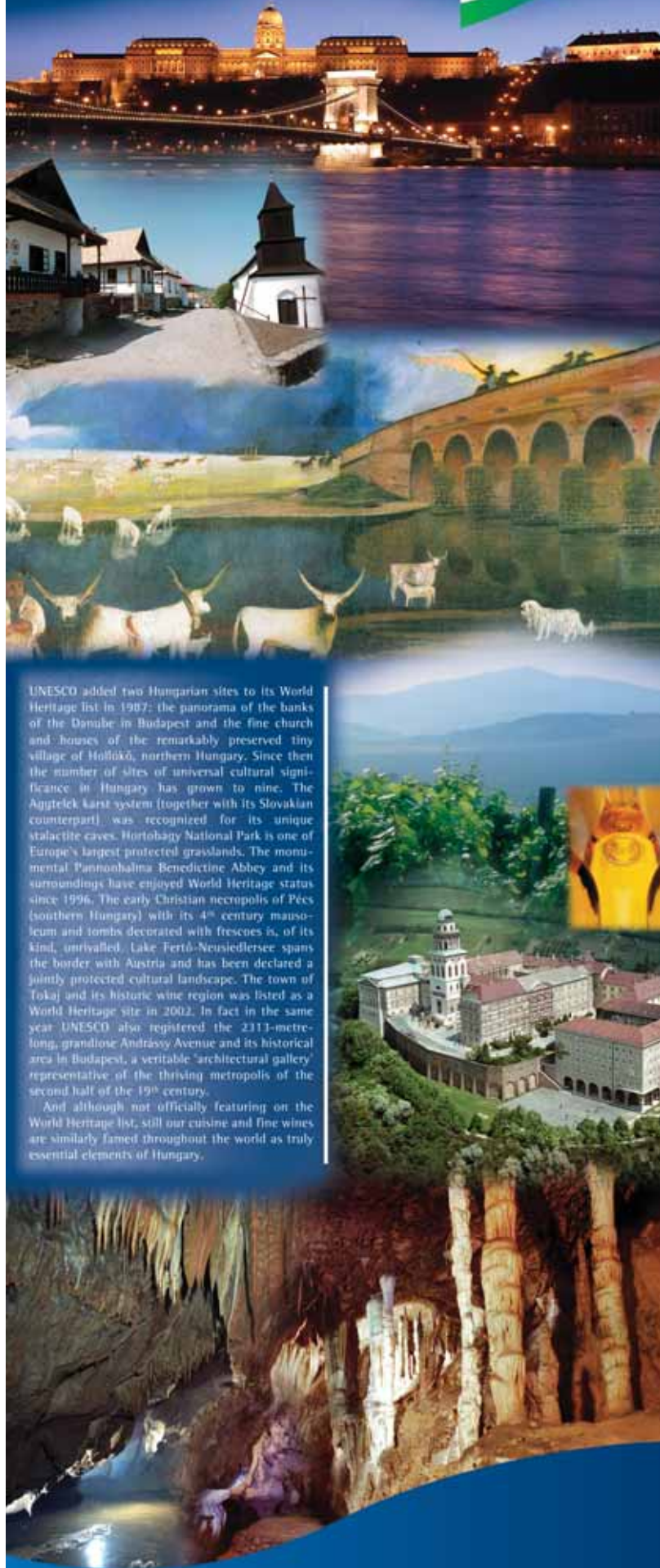
It is Hungary's position that by preserving the common achievements of the past few years and in the course of redefining common policies a reasonable balance must be found between inevitable reforms and essential stability. This is particularly important in the instance of regional policy and the common agricultural policy. Innovative energy, migration and security policies are called for, yet at the same time Hungary is working, for instance, to strengthen existing common policies in the areas of science and R&D which promote improved competitiveness. When formulating and modifying policies it is important to remember that the "traditional" attribute for common policies is not necessarily a synonym for obsolete, or in other words not every traditional policy requires restructuring.

Hungary wants to see a strong union of Member States. It does not believe that the results achieved so far are sufficient. Budapest is a firm advocate of

progress both in terms of the deepening of links and enlargement. It supports strengthening community decision-making, and yet in the most sensitive areas it respects the demands of several Member States to maintain the principle of unanimity. Equally, it is obvious to Hungary that “communitytization” can only proceed at a pace acceptable to its citizens. Democracy, the closer inclusion of national parliaments, transparency and subsidiarity are not empty slogans but the basic principles capable of maintaining the capacity of the European Union to develop over the long-term. Building a Europe without the involvement of its citizens is an extremely risky venture. This is why politicians, experts, the media and businesses have a common responsibility to draw an authentic picture of the past, present and future of the EU. This will not be easy.

One often hears overly optimistic, near fairy-tale words about the EU. This, however, is misleading since a legal/institutional structure the size of the EU cannot be totally free of faults and inevitably will struggle with many problems. The interests and viewpoints of the 27 Member States and the European institutions differ; it is possible to reach a meeting of minds, a common denominator, only after exhaustive, lengthy and complicated negotiations. At the same time, it is the easy option to place the responsibility for everything on Brussels, to depict the search for consensus as incompetence or impotence, and to present com-

World Heritage



UNESCO added two Hungarian sites to its World Heritage list in 1987: the panorama of the banks of the Danube in Budapest and the fine church and houses of the remarkably preserved tiny village of Hollókő, northern Hungary. Since then the number of sites of universal cultural significance in Hungary has grown to nine. The Aggtelek karst system (together with its Slovakian counterpart) was recognized for its unique stalactite caves. Hortobágy National Park is one of Europe's largest protected grasslands. The monumental Pannonhalma Benedictine Abbey and its surroundings have enjoyed World Heritage status since 1996. The early Christian necropolis of Pécs (southern Hungary) with its 4th century mausoleum and tombs decorated with frescoes is, of its kind, unrivalled. Lake Fertő-Neusiedlersee spans the border with Austria and has been declared a jointly protected cultural landscape. The town of Tokaj and its historic wine region was listed as a World Heritage site in 2002. In fact in the same year UNESCO also registered the 2313-metre-long, grandiose Andrassy Avenue and its historical area in Budapest, a veritable 'architectural gallery' representative of the thriving metropolis of the second half of the 19th century.

And although not officially featuring on the World Heritage list, still our cuisine and fine wines are similarly famed throughout the world as truly essential elements of Hungary.

plexity and diversity as cacophony. The daily affairs of the European Union impinge on the day-to-day lives of its citizens. It is the duty of us all to communicate this in a way that is understandable to all.

Hungary is a believer in preserving openness. Both enlargement and neighbour policies are included in this. Undeniably, the majority of European citizens have still not fully come to terms with the largest expansion. This will require time, both in the old Member States and the new. However, it does not imply the suspension of enlargement, the closure of the gates. We cannot speak of an “enlargement break” because accession negotiations are continuing with Croatia and Turkey, and indeed all the western Balkan states now have a European perspective. If one is to look at a map, it is plain to see

that from 1 January 2007 the western Balkan countries are surrounded by EU states. The unification of Europe has led to the point where “only” four islands remain. Switzerland, Norway and Iceland could join the European Union, but for the moment they do not wish to become members. On the other hand, the countries of the west Balkan region would like to join but they are not yet able, while some will require many years before they can meet the conditions for accession. However, the intertwining of relations and reliance on each other grows stronger each day. The example of the west Balkans shows precisely how the disintegration resulting from a bloody and brutal war can be turned around if the opportunity for voluntary European integration is given as an alternative.

There are strict preconditions to enlargement. Rights can be wielded only by those capable of fulfilling their commitments. Hungary and Hungarian society worked hard for this recognition. The first years of membership have proved that in itself accession does not represent a general and eternal cure for our problems. Common values, a common set of laws and systematized cooperation, however, result in cooperation – unprecedented in terms of intensity and extent – between the peoples of Europe. The countries of the European Union have not renounced their sovereignty; rather they exercise a part of it jointly. It is our common responsibility to nurture, protect and further develop the achievements of this historical undertaking. This is in the basic interests, and is a fundamental objective of Hungary.

