

Nationality rights



Nationalities living in Hungary are constituent elements of the State. All Hungarian citizens belonging to a nationality have the right to freely assume and preserve their identity. Nationalities living in Hungary have the right to use their mother tongue, to use their individual and community names in their own language, to cultivate their own culture and to receive education in their mother tongue (Article XXIX (1) of the Fundamental Law).

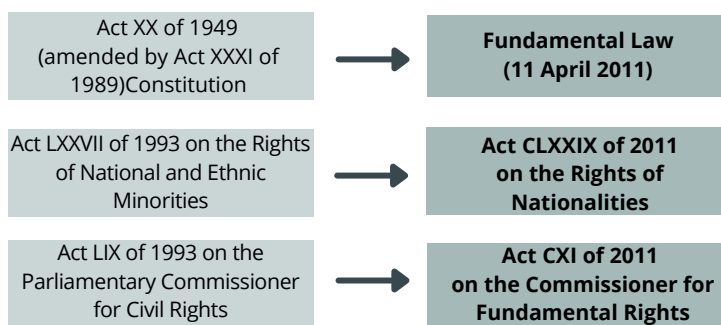
	number (persons)	self-governments (Nr.)	
		municipal	regional
Armenian	3.571	33	1
Bulgarian	6.272	35	1
Croatian	26.774	117	7
Greek	4.642	36	1
German	185.696	407	15
Polish	7.001	45	1
Roma	315.583	1209	20
Romanian	35.641	70	5
Serbian	10.038	47	2
Slovakian	35.208	113	6
Slovene	2.820	10	0
Ruthenian	3.882	43	2
Ukrainian	7.396	35	1

According to the definition – which has remained unchanged since 1993, when this area of law was first regulated in a comprehensive manner –, **nationality** is any ethnic group which **has been resident in Hungary for at least a century**, is a **numerical minority** within the population of the country, is distinguished from the rest of the population by its **own language, culture and traditions**, and at the same time **demonstrates a sense of belonging together** which is aimed at preserving all these features and expressing and protecting the interests of their historically established communities.

The field of nationality law is one of the **most complex segments** of the Hungarian legal system: it is a body of law, which is based on international foundations and is extremely thoroughly elaborated in terms of text and dogmatics, and it has advanced support and control mechanisms.

It is both **a sensitive and a strong regulatory environment**, which, according to the 2011 census, provides the basis for the enforcement of rights and interests of 644,524 persons, but according to sociological surveys the number of the citizens concerned is nearly one million.

The aim of the system is to ensure the effective preservation, strengthening and transmission of **nationality identity** by developing specific rights, institutions and a funding environment.



The three pillars of nationality law

1

regulation

- international legal documents
- Fundamental Law
- the Act on the Rights of Nationalities
- sectoral legislation

2

implementation

- local, regional and national self-governments of the nationalities
- Prime Minister's Office
- Ministry of the Interior
- sectoral ministries
- regional administration authorities
- local governments

3

control

- Parliament's Commission of the Nationalities in Hungary
- Minority Ombudsman
- State Audit Office
- government offices

The aim of the nationality protection system is to create and develop **cultural autonomy**, and the means to achieve this is to provide the necessary **additional rights**. For persons and communities belonging to a nationality, it is not enough to grant formal equality of rights, but to achieve de facto equality, affirmative action and special support are also needed. Domestic legislation therefore **guarantees individual and community nationality rights** for the persons concerned that provide broad opportunities for the preservation and development of cultural identity.



Individual rights

- declaration of belonging to a nationality
- preservation, nurturing, strengthening and transmission of self-identity
- protection of sensitive personal data relating to nationality
- protection against discrimination on grounds of nationality

- use of mother tongue
- education in mother tongue
- use of mother tongue names
- practice of religion in the mother tongue
- preservation, cultivation and transmission of culture and traditions
- safeguarding the spiritual and built heritage

Community rights



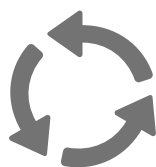
- participation in the work of the Parliament
- setting up nationality self-governments
- setting up and maintenance of educational, training and cultural institutions
- organising events and festivities
- maintaining relations with the mother country

Due to demographic and sociological characteristics, the concept of **cultural autonomy** prevails in our country. This allows communities to **decide autonomously** on specific educational or cultural matters that concern them, and **to establish or maintain their own institutional system** for this purpose. These are typically financed by the central budget.

	nationality			nationality theatres:	13	
	- kindergarten:	416			nationality libraries:	34
	- grammar school:	472				
	- secondary school:	28				
- other:	35					

The operational framework for cultural self-government is the **three-tiered nationality self-government system**. A nationality self-government is a body with legal personality, established by democratic elections, which performs nationality public service tasks, operating in the form of a body. Its purpose is to **enforce nationality rights, protect the interests** of nationalities and **represent nationality public affairs**. It performs its tasks **in cooperation** with the Government, regional state administration bodies and local governments, and **is financed** by the budget and under special grants. Today, there are nearly 2,300 local (municipal and regional) self-governments, 80% of which are made up of the four largest nationality communities.

municipal



regional national

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