

Nationality rights



National minorities living in Hungary shall be constituent parts of the State. Every Hungarian citizen belonging to a national minority shall have the right to freely express and preserve his or her identity. National minorities living in Hungary shall have the right to use their mother tongue, to use names in their own languages individually and collectively, to nurture their own cultures, and to receive education in their mother tongues (Article XXIX (1) of the Fundamental Law).

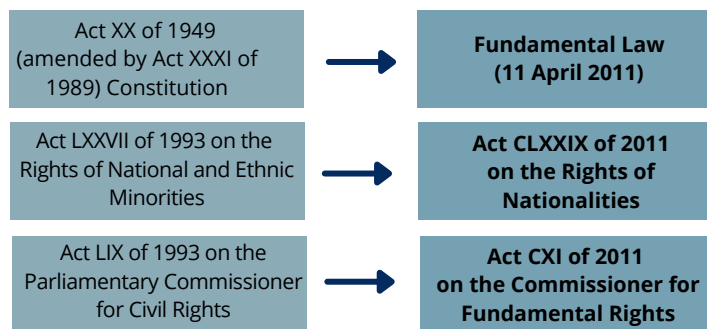
	2001	2011	2022
Bulgarian	2.316	6.272	6.109
Greek	6.619	4.642	6.178
Croatian	25.730	26.774	21.824
Polish	5.144	7.001	7.398
German	120.344	185.696	142.551
Armenian	1.165	3.571	4.199
Roma	205.720	315.583	209.909
Romanian	14.781	35.641	27.554
Ruthenian	2.079	3.882	7.111
Serbian	7.350	10.038	11.622
Slovakian	39.266	35.208	29.881
Slovene	4.832	2.820	3.965
Ukrainian	7.393	7.396	24.615
	442.739	644.524	502.916

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 2022 census, provides the basis for the enforcement of rights and interests of 502,916 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.

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 three pillars of nationality law

1 regulation

- documents of international law
- 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

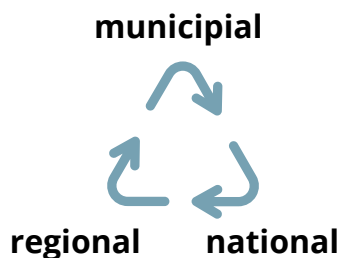
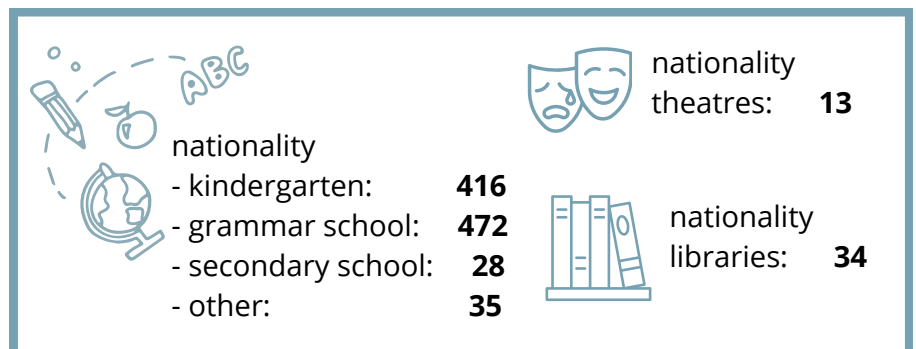
- use of mother-tongue
- education in mother-tongue
- use of mother-tongue names
- practice of religion in the mother-tongue
- preservation, cultivation and transmission of culture and traditions
- safeguarding the spiritual and built heritage



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.



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.

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