



# **Attitudes toward the EU among Transylvanian Hungarians 2014, 2019, 2023**

## **Research Report**

**November 2023**

**Final report**

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The processing of the publication was concluded in 2023.

# 1. The Purpose and Methodology of the Analysis

Our goal with the current analysis is to present an overall view of the attitudes of Hungarians in Transylvania towards the EU and about its changes between 2014 and 2023. Romania joined the EU in 2007. The Hungarian community within Romania has a particular attitude towards the EU and has specific expectations from it – our analysis deals mainly with these attitudes and expectations. According to the latest census in 2021, there are about one million ethnic Hungarians in Romania representing 6 percent of the country's permanent population. In the European Parliament elections, the Hungarian community in Transylvania has elected two or three deputies: in 2007 the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) sent two deputies (with 5.5 percent of the votes) and there was elected one more independent candidate, László Tókéş; in 2009 the RMDSZ sent three deputies (with 8.9 percent) and in 2014 and 2019 two deputies (with 6.3 percent and 5.3 percent).

Our report is based on three surveys carried out on a representative sample of Hungarian population in Transylvania. The researches were commissioned by the Kós Károly Academy Foundation and the Centre for European Studies of Brussels (Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies).

The surveys used a similar methodology (same sampling methodology, same questions) to elicit opinions expressed by ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania. We also made sure that our results are comparable with to Eurobarometer data, so that it is possible to compare with the opinions of Hungarians in Transylvania and with the population of the other member states as well. We focused on three main reference points for interpreting attitudes of Hungarians in Transylvania: EU averages, data for Romania and for Hungary, respectively. We consider all these important, because Hungarians in Transylvania are at least as familiar with the political arena in Hungary as with the political environment in Romania.

The main subject areas of our analysis are the following, among others: general social climate, problems the population faces, direction of the EU, trust in the EU, opinions about accession to the EU, its benefits and disadvantages.

Geographically, our surveys have covered 16 counties in Romania (Alba, Arad, Bistriţa-Năşăud, Braşov, Caraş-Severin, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Maramureş, Mureş, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Sibiu and Timiş). According to census results, 98 percent of ethnic Hungarians in Romania live in these counties. The data from surveys on ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania are compared to those of the Eurobarometer that were conducted the closest to them in time. It is important to point out the fact that while the Eurobarometer surveys refer to the population aged 15 years and older, the surveys on Hungarians in Transylvania refer to the population aged 18 and older. This difference is not negligible but the results are nevertheless comparable from the point of view of underlying trends.

## 1. The description of surveys on Hungarians in Transylvania used in this paper and the names of Eurobarometer surveys used for comparison

Survey	Organization	Fieldwork	Sample	Margin of error	Comparison with EB
2014 Apr.	TransObjective Consulting SRL	2014.03.21–04.07	N=1626	±2,5%	EB81.2, (2014 spring)
2019 Jun.	SoDiSo Research SRL	2019.06.10–26.	N=1190	±2,9%	EB91.5, (2019 summer)
2023 March	SoDiSo Research SRL	2023.03.10–31.	N=1171	±2,9%	EB98.2, (2023 winter)
2023 Nov.	SoDiSo Research SRL	2023.11.03–22.	N=1196	±2,9%	EB99.4, (2023 spring) EB100, (2023 autumn)

We will present the results of the latest survey on ethnic Hungarians (November 2023) by several demographic and social background variable as well. One such variable is the region in Transylvania where respondents live: Seklerland (Harghita and Covasna counties), Partium (Bihar, Satu Mare and Salaj counties), Central Transylvania (Cluj and Mures counties) and the Diaspora (Arad, Bistrita-Nasaud, Brasov, Alba, Hunedoara, Maramures, Sibiu and Timis counties). This distinction is important because the share of Hungarians in the population in these regions varies. In Seklerland the Hungarians make up 80, in Partium 27, in Central Transylvania 25 and in the diaspora approximately 6 percent of the population. Besides the level of regions, we take into consideration: the size of settlement, sex, age, educational level, activity and the income (based on the respondent's estimation) of the respondent. The number and proportion of respondents by these variables are presented in the table below.

## 2. Characteristics of the sample of the survey of Ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania, November 2023

		<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Region</b>	Seklerland	388	32,4
	Central Transylvania	301	25,2
	Partium	297	24,8
	Diaspora	210	17,6
<b>Size of settlement (number of inhabitants)</b>	Under 1000	158	13,2
	Between 1000-2500	248	20,7
	Between 2500-15 thousand	273	22,8
	Between 15-100 thousand	253	21,1
	Over 100 thousand	265	22,2
<b>Gender</b>	Male	568	47,5
	Female	628	52,5
<b>Age</b>	18–34 years	310	25,9
	35–49 years	282	23,5
	50–64 years	257	21,5
	Above 64 years	347	29,0
<b>Educational level</b>	Primary	227	19,0
	Professional	393	32,8
	High school	447	37,3
	Higher education	130	10,9
<b>Subjective assessment of their income</b>	Lives in hardship	125	10,4
	Comes out with a schedule	455	38,1
	Lives decently	502	42,0
	Lives without financial problems	113	9,5
<b>Total sample</b>		<b>1 196</b>	<b>100,0</b>

## 2. Social climate, problems

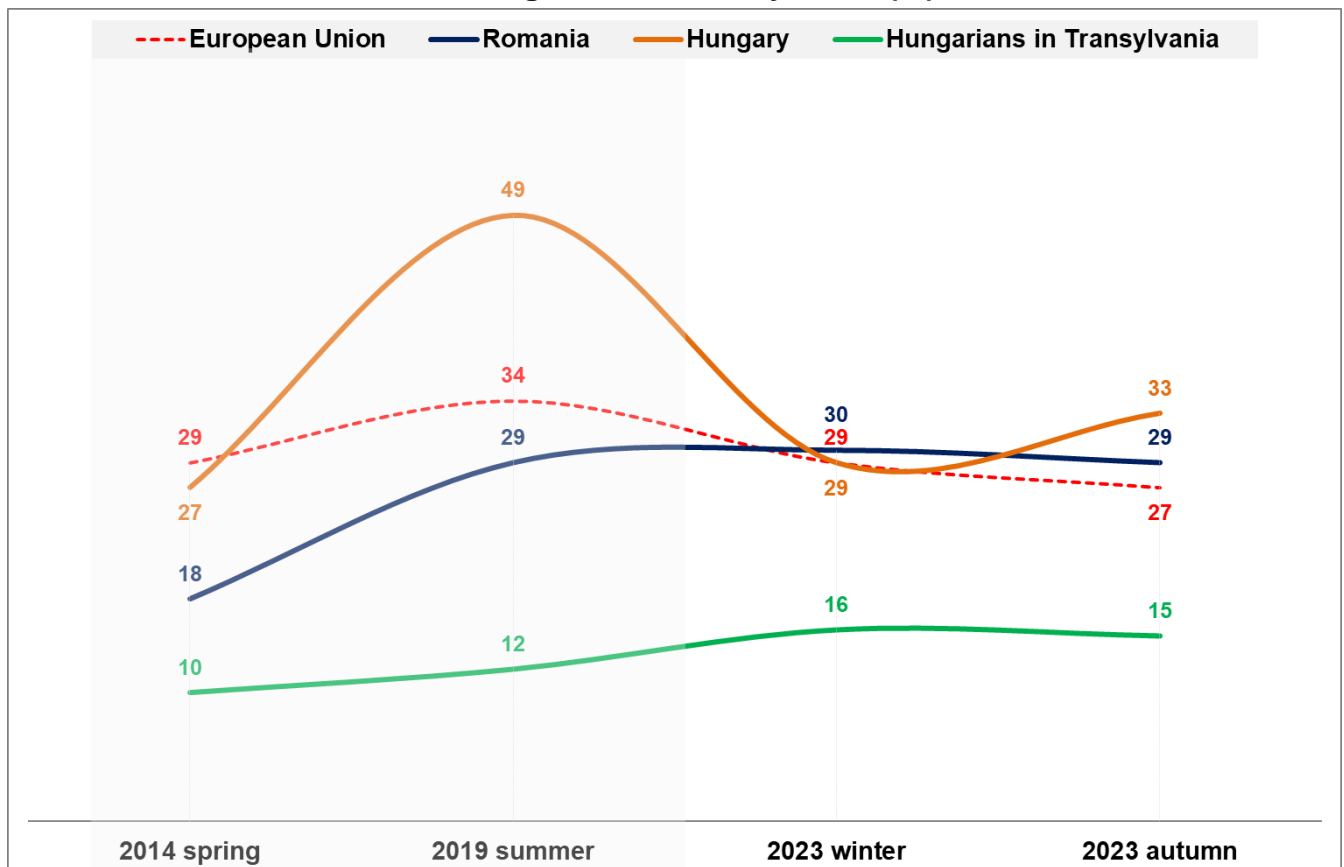
### 2.1. The Direction of the Country

At the time of the survey the general climate of Hungarians in Transylvania was basically negative and compared to the EU member states it was also very pessimistic. In autumn 2023 about 15 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania believed that things were going well in the country (Romania). This value means that the general climate of Hungarians in Transylvania is comparable to France and Cyprus (14 percent) or Sweden (18 percent).

It is important to note that Hungarians in Transylvania are significantly more pessimistic than the Romanian average. At all times when surveys were conducted, the overall population of Romania was significantly more optimistic, for example in 2023 the national average was 29-30 percent while within the Hungarian community it was just 15-16 percent who thought that Romania was heading in the right direction.

According to the results of our survey carried out in autumn 2023 pessimistic attitudes are more frequent among working-aged, professional and high school education graduates, living in more modest material conditions.

### 3. Share of population considering that the country is going in the right direction: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)



**4. At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction in Romania? Hungarians in Transylvania, November 2023, by several background variables (%)**

		<b>Right direction</b>	<b>Wrong direction</b>	<b>DK, NA</b>
<b>Region</b>	Seklerland	14	82	4
	Central Transylvania	15	80	4
	Partium	16	80	4
	Diaspora	14	79	6
<b>Size of settlement (number of inhabitants)</b>	Under 1000	13	79	8
	Between 1000-2500	<b>17</b>	80	3
	Between 2500-15 thousand	15	82	4
	Between 15-100 thousand	16	79	5
	Over 100 thousand	14	82	4
<b>Gender</b>	Male	16	81	3
	Female	14	80	6
<b>Age</b>	18–34 years	<b>20</b>	78	2
	35–49 years	11	<b>84</b>	6
	50–64 years	12	<b>84</b>	5
	Above 64 years	<b>17</b>	78	6
<b>Educational level</b>	Primary	<b>20</b>	73	7
	Professional	12	<b>84</b>	4
	High school	14	82	4
	Higher education	<b>17</b>	80	3
<b>Subjective assessment of their income</b>	Lives in hardship	9	<b>89</b>	2
	Comes out with a schedule	12	<b>84</b>	4
	Lives decently	<b>17</b>	77	6
	Lives without financial problems	<b>24</b>	73	4
<b>Total sample</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>5</b>

## 5. Share of population perceiving the direction of the country as good (%)

Country	2014 spring	2019 summer	2023 winter	2023 autumn ↓
Luxembourg	53	71	59	60
Ireland	45	66	51	54
Denmark	54	58	43	41
Belgium	37	38	31	41
Austria	35	49	31	35
Slovenia	9	37	33	34
Latvia	22	35	33	33
Hungary	27	49	29	33
Italy	13	28	38	32
Lithuania	22	47	34	32
Croatia	15	23	21	31
Netherlands	52	56	27	30
Poland	29	47	23	30
Finland	38	54	37	29
Czech Republic	30	45	36	29
Romania	18	29	30	29
Malta	54	59	59	28
Germany	46	39	36	28
Estonia	45	35	35	27
EU average	28	34	29	27
Portugal	21	44	25	27
Spain	18	32	25	25
Slovakia	20	30	15	25
Greece	9	17	23	23
Bulgaria	18	25	14	21
Sweden	46	43	20	18
Hungarians in Transylvania*	11	12	16	15
Cyprus	22	30	22	14
France	15	25	16	14
United Kingdom	39	20	-	-

<i>Imaginary rank for Hungarians in Transylvania</i>	26	28	26	26
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<i>Source</i>	<i>EB81.2</i>	<i>EB91.5</i>	<i>EB98.2</i>	<i>EB100.1</i>
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\* For data source for Hungarians in Transylvania: see table 1.

United Kingdom – EU state member until 2020

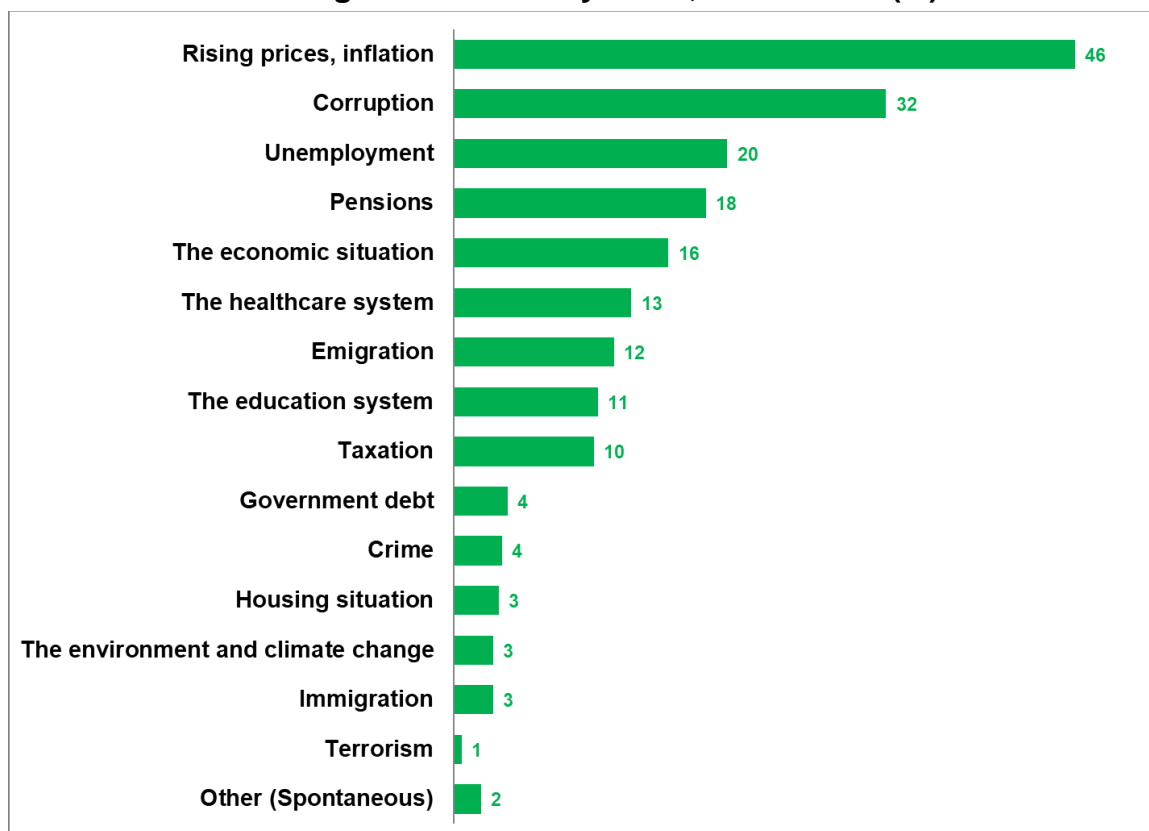
Croatia – EU state member from 2013

## 2.2. The Problems of the Population

In our spring survey we asked people about various problems of general interest and public policy and a possible list of priorities. In our questionnaire the question – *What do you think are the two main problems that Romania faces currently?* – has not exactly the same response options like in the Eurobarometer survey. We introduced two items that it did not have because it is an important issue and topic in the Eastern and Central European member states, and this is enough justification for a rethinking of the methodology. The two items are *corruption* and *migration*. However, also two new items of the Eurobarometer survey were not used: the international situation and energy supply. In case of Romania *corruption* (and the ways justice worked in the country) has been one of the most important social and political problems in the country in the last years. In the same way, *emigration* is a central problem in Romania given that it is the country most affected by this process.

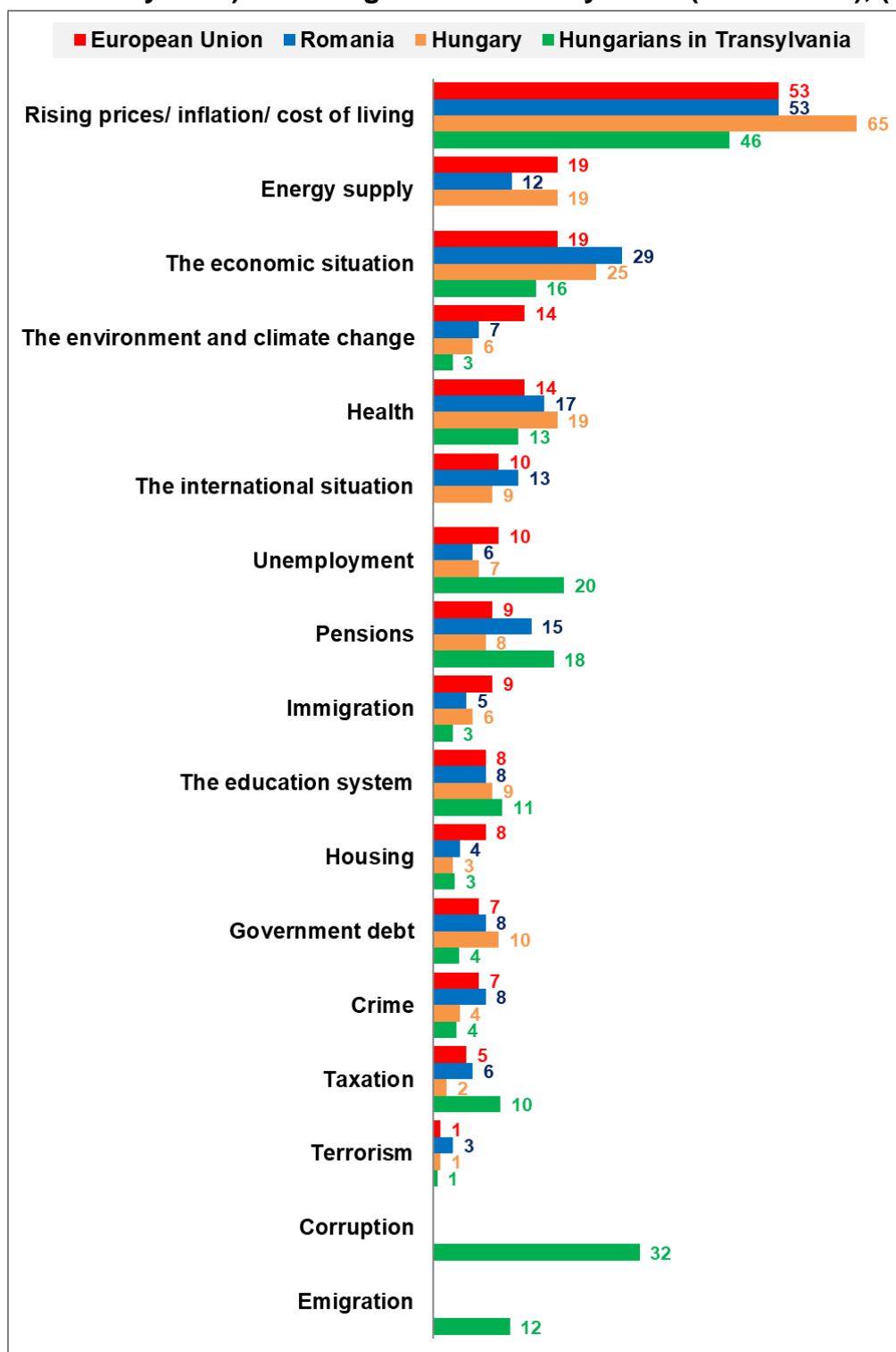
Differences in methodology make considerable difference in results too, evidently. Hungarians in Transylvania (in a proportion of 32 percent) consider corruption to be the main problem the country faces and it is highly probable that this is the case in the total population too. However, the most urgent problems among Hungarians in Transylvania, as in the whole European Union as are economic by nature: inflation, unemployment, the general economic situation, the incomes and the retirement benefits.

### 6. What do you think are the two most important issues Romania facing at the moment? Hungarians in Transylvania, March 2023 (%)





7. What do you think are the two most important issues facing [OUR COUNTRY] at the moment? European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer survey, January-February 2023) and Hungarians in Transylvania (March 2023), (%)



\* “Corruption” and “emigration” were mentioned only in the survey carried out among the Hungarian population in Transylvania, and two new items of the Eurobarometer survey were not used in our survey, such as “international situation” and “energy supply”.

**8. Population problems. Hungarians in Transylvania,  
by several background variables, March 2023 (%)**

		Infla- tion	Corrup- tion	Unem- ploy- ment	Pen- sions	Econo- mic situation	Health	Emig- ration	Educa- tion	Taxa- tion
<b>Region</b>	Seklerland	46	25	<b>26</b>	14	<b>20</b>	12	<b>21</b>	12	7
	Central Transylvania	43	<b>44</b>	16	20	11	10	9	8	<b>15</b>
	Partium	45	22	21	18	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	6	12	8
	Diaspora	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	14	<b>26</b>	12	13	8	11	<b>13</b>
<b>Size of settlement</b>	Under 1000	48	19	21	<b>23</b>	17	13	10	6	9
	Between 1000-2500	44	34	<b>23</b>	20	15	12	10	10	<b>13</b>
	Between 2500-15 thousand	<b>48</b>	30	<b>28</b>	15	17	11	<b>19</b>	10	9
	Between 15-100 thousand	37	31	18	16	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	12	<b>13</b>	9
	Over 100 thousand	<b>51</b>	<b>40</b>	9	20	12	13	8	12	10
<b>Gender</b>	Male	45	<b>39</b>	19	14	<b>18</b>	11	13	8	12
	Female	46	25	21	22	14	<b>15</b>	10	<b>13</b>	9
<b>Age</b>	18–34 years	43	27	<b>24</b>	5	<b>18</b>	13	13	<b>22</b>	12
	35–49 years	46	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	5	<b>19</b>	12	11	9	<b>13</b>
	50–64 years	<b>48</b>	31	<b>23</b>	19	14	12	11	7	12
	Above 64 years	46	31	10	<b>41</b>	12	14	11	5	5
<b>Educational level</b>	Primary	<b>49</b>	28	22	<b>31</b>	9	14	6	2	6
	Professional	<b>50</b>	31	22	19	15	9	<b>15</b>	6	12
	High school	41	33	19	14	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	11	<b>17</b>	10
	Higher education	39	<b>38</b>	11	9	15	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	12
<b>Subjective assessment of their income</b>	Lives in hardship	<b>48</b>	32	18	<b>23</b>	16	14	4	4	<b>14</b>
	Comes out with a schedule	47	33	19	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	12	12	8	9
	Lives decently	44	30	22	15	16	12	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	11
	Without financial problems	42	34	19	9	3	<b>23</b>	11	<b>20</b>	6
<b>Total sample</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>

### 3. Opinions about the EU

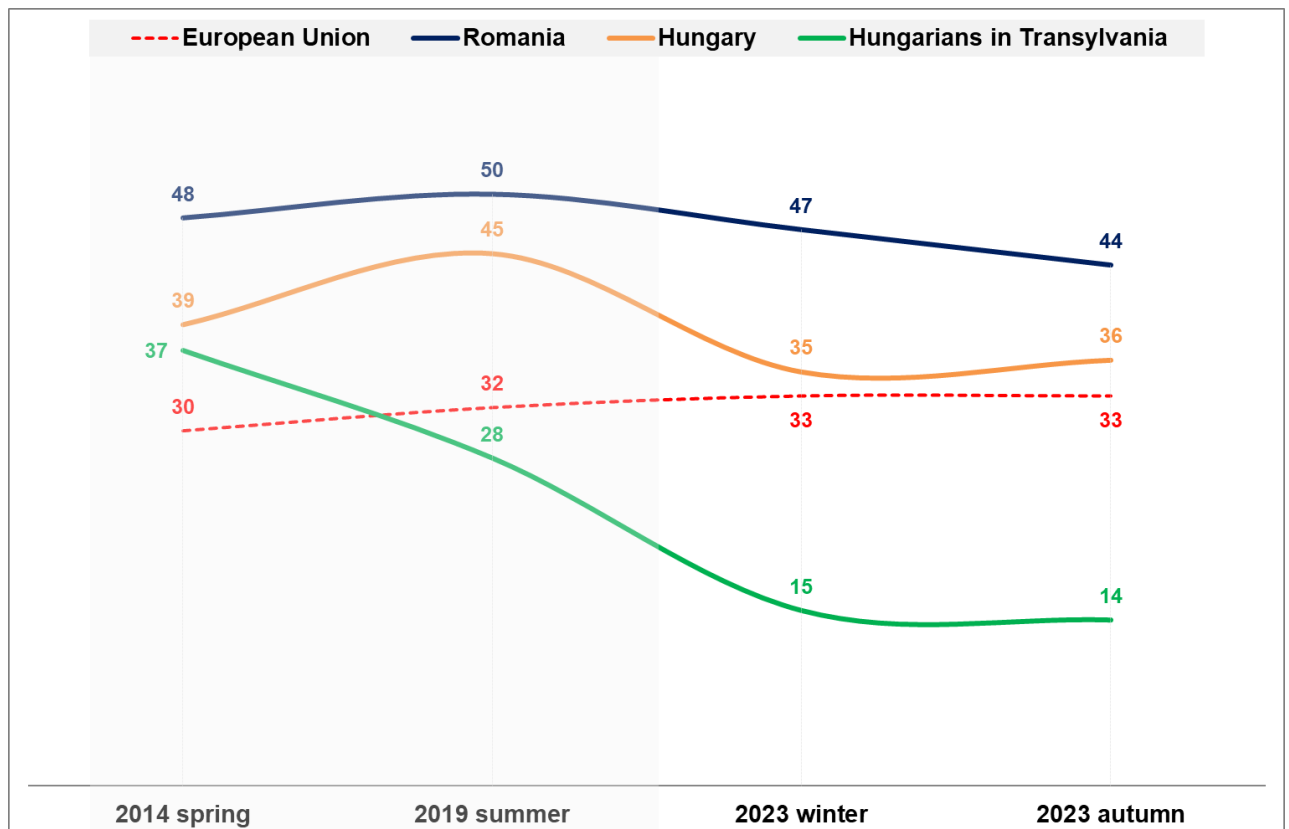
#### 3.1. The Direction and the Future of the EU

The attitude of Hungarians in Transylvania towards the EU has changed significantly over the years. While in 2014 37 percent thought that things were going in the right direction in the EU, this had fallen to 14 percent by 2023 autumn. In terms of public opinion towards the EU, Hungarians in Transylvania started from a position in the middle and reached one of most pessimistic position.

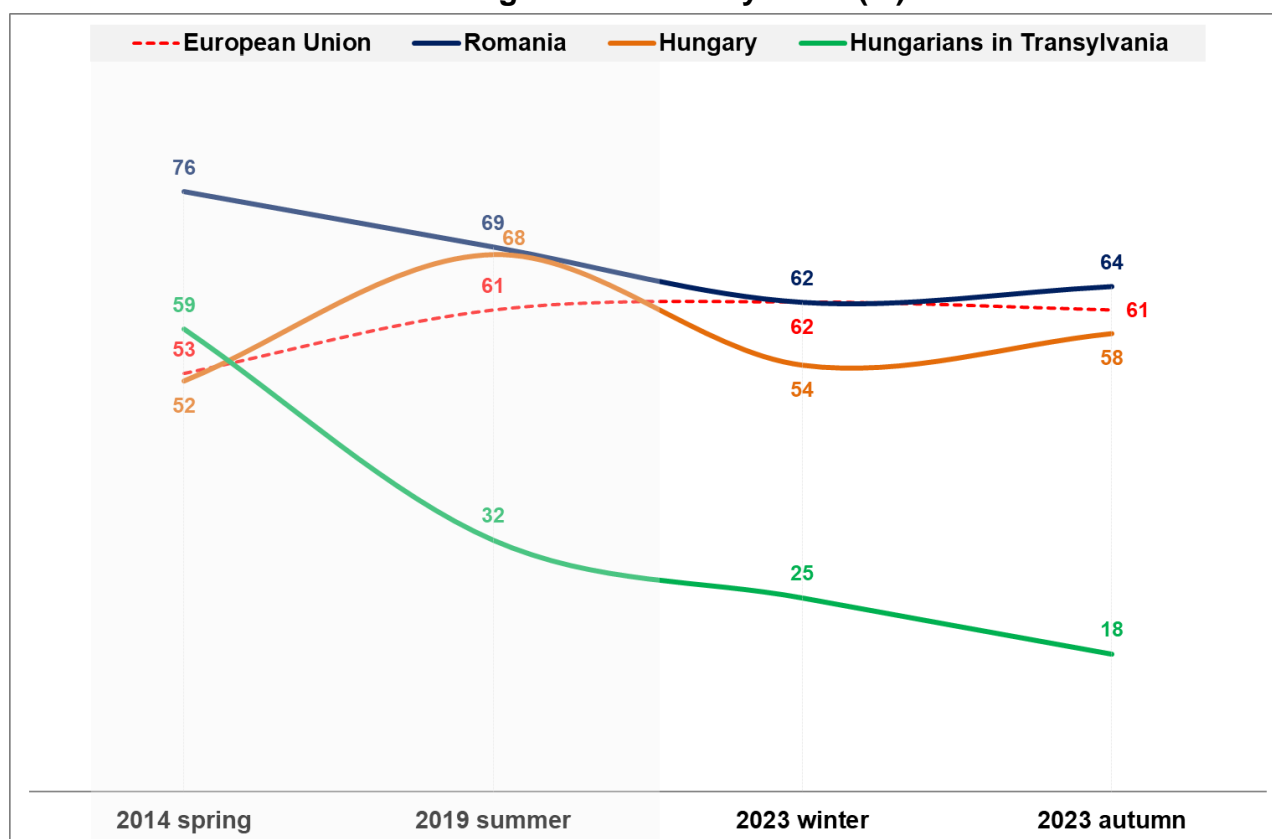
The differences are also interesting compared to the reference countries. On the one hand, for Romania's total population there was no significant change between 2014 and 2023, with around half of respondents having a positive view of the direction of the EU. However, a significant decrease can be observed here as well in 2023. Nevertheless, Romania remains in the upper-middle category in the ranking, one of the most euro-optimistic member states. In the case of Hungary, the perception of the EU is more undulating, but the proportion of sceptics is above the EU average in all four measurement times.

The situation is similar regarding the assessment of the future of the EU. Hungarians in Transylvania are much more pessimist as the other member states: in 2019 one third of them had a positive attitude towards the future of the EU, this value in 2023 autumn has decreased to 18 percent.

**9. At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction, in the European Union? Share of people considering that things are heading in the right direction: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)**



# 10. Would you say that you are optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the EU? European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)



In the spring survey, we also asked why Hungarians in Transylvania think that things are going in the right or wrong direction in the European Union. Among those who mentioned the good direction in the open-ended question, the most frequent, almost 30 percent, mentioned the supports, developments, funds provided by the EU. A further 10 percent said that the EU was responsible for better living conditions. Around 6 percent of respondents mentioned better leaders, better decisions, consensus and cohesion, unity, coherent actions. Less than 10 respondents mentioned democracy, freedom, legal protection; hope for the good; attitude to war, support for Ukraine; environment; security and peace as factors that point in the right direction for the EU.

Those who think that the EU is going in the wrong direction (78 percent of the total sample) drew a very broad picture of the problems in their answers to the open-ended question. At the top of the list of causes, mentioned by more than one fifth of respondents, was the EU's attitude to war: "supporting and inciting war, wanting to get involved, to stir into the war". The second and third most frequently mentioned, by 13-14 percent of respondents, were corruption and theft, and the economic meltdown, rising prices, lack of money, unemployment. A further 5 percent criticised the way the EU works, with the core countries dictating, imposing their will and oppressing the smaller ones, thus imposing Brussels dictatorship and double standards. The proportion of those who criticised bad, incompetent leaders was also close to 5 percent. Fewer than 40, but at least 20 of respondents said that EU did not represent their interests, that EU did not care about the people, the citizens; the lack of head, the lack of purpose, the political crisis; the desire for money and power, that EU only seek their own interests; the management of immigration and the letting in of migrants; the divisiveness, the lack of cohesion; the globalization, loss of identity, misinterpreted, excessive liberalism, gender and LGBTQ, immorality.

### 11. What is the reason? Mentioning the right direction. Open ended question, March 2023

	N	% mentioners	% from the sample
Supports, developments, funds	49	29,1%	4,2%
Better living conditions	17	10,1%	1,5%
Better leaders, better decisions, consensus	10	6,0%	0,9%
Cohesion, unity, coherent action	10	5,6%	0,8%
Democracy, freedom, legal protection	6	3,5%	0,5%
Hope for the good	5	2,7%	0,4%
Attitude to war, support for Ukraine	4	2,5%	0,4%
Environment	3	1,6%	0,2%
Security, peace	2	1,2%	0,2%
<i>Other, with one mention</i>	4	2,1%	0,3%
<i>Doesn't know</i>	37	21,7%	3,1%
<i>No answer</i>	24	14,1%	2,0%
<b>Total "right direction"</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>14,5%</b>

### 12. What is the reason? Mentioning the wrong direction. Open ended question, March 2023

	N	% mentioners	% from the sample
Supporting and inciting war, wanting to get involved, to stir into the war	199	21,7%	17,0%
Corruption, theft	130	14,2%	11,1%
Economic meltdown, rising prices, lack of money, unemployment	115	12,6%	9,8%
Core countries dictate, oppression of the smaller states, Brussels dictatorship, double standards, imposing their own will	45	5,0%	3,9%
Bad, incompetent leaders	43	4,7%	3,7%
Not representing our interests, not interested in people, citizens	39	4,3%	3,4%
Lack of head, lack of purpose, political crisis	38	4,1%	3,2%
Desire for money and power, seeking only their own interests	34	3,7%	2,9%
Managing immigration, letting migrants in	24	2,7%	2,1%
Divisiveness, no cohesion	22	2,4%	1,9%
Globalization, loss of identity, misinterpreted, excessive liberalism, gender, LGBTQ, immorality	20	2,2%	1,7%
Introducing sanctions	15	1,6%	1,2%
American subordination, foreign influence	14	1,6%	1,2%
Colonialism, exploitation, inequality	13	1,4%	1,1%
Hurting Hungary, Hungarians	7	0,7%	0,6%
Minority issues are not addressed, we are not represented	6	0,6%	0,5%
Energy crisis	5	0,5%	0,4%
Bureaucracy, too much regulation	3	0,3%	0,3%
Neglect of environmental protection	2	0,2%	0,2%
<i>Other, with one mention</i>	4	0,4%	0,3%
<i>Nothing is good</i>	6	0,6%	0,5%
<i>Doesn't know</i>	65	7,0%	5,5%
<i>No answer</i>	67	7,4%	5,8%
<b>Total "wrong direction"</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>78,1%</b>

### 13. Share of population perceiving the direction of the European Union as good (%)

	2014 spring	2019 summer	2023 winter	2023 autumn ↓
Ireland	38	57	49	51
Lithuania	45	45	46	48
Latvia	35	45	49	46
Poland	46	47	41	46
Croatia	47	52	40	45
Belgium	40	38	26	44
Romania	48	50	47	44
Slovenia	32	36	32	44
Denmark	46	34	35	42
Luxembourg	39	33	33	41
Malta	43	31	50	41
Bulgaria	49	45	36	38
Netherlands	45	38	38	37
Slovakia	35	30	26	37
Austria	25	39	32	36
Hungary	39	45	35	36
Italy	11	23	37	36
Portugal	25	42	33	34
Estonia	49	35	34	33
EU average	30	32	33	33
Spain	26	35	28	33
Sweden	41	27	33	33
Czech Republic	35	31	33	31
Finland	33	34	28	29
Greece	16	22	27	29
Germany	33	29	36	28
Cyprus	19	23	22	24
France	21	22	17	20
Hungarians in Transylvania*	37	28	15	14
United Kingdom	20	21	-	-

<i>Imaginary rank for Hungarians in Transylvania</i>	14	22	28	28
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<i>Source</i>	EB81.2	EB91.5	EB98.2	EB100.1
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\* For data source for Hungarians in Transylvania: see table 1.

United Kingdom – EU state member until 2020

Croatia – EU state member from 2013

**14. Would you say that you are very optimistic, fairly optimistic, fairly pessimistic or very pessimistic about the future of the EU? Aggregated „optimistic” responses (%)**

	<b>2014 spring</b>	<b>2019 summer</b>	<b>2023 winter</b>	<b>2024 autumn ↓</b>
Ireland	65	85	84	83
Denmark	66	79	80	81
Poland	70	74	77	77
Lithuania	64	76	75	76
Finland	62	71	73	74
Netherlands	63	73	72	73
Croatia	67	67	74	72
Luxembourg	65	69	71	72
Sweden	62	64	75	72
Latvia	55	67	74	68
Malta	71	69	73	65
<b>Romania</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>64</b>
Spain	51	68	66	63
Italy	41	56	66	62
Belgium	63	65	60	61
<b>EU average</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>61</b>
Slovakia	58	70	51	60
Slovenia	58	69	65	59
Portugal	42	70	69	59
Germany	60	67	61	59
Estonia	66	72	61	58
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>58</b>
Austria	48	66	56	57
Bulgaria	61	62	55	55
Czech Republic	53	54	55	55
Cyprus	43	65	54	51
Greece	37	45	45	48
France	42	50	46	47
<b>Hungarians in Transylvania*</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>
United Kingdom	44	47	-	-

<i>Imaginary rank for Hungarians in Transylvania</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>28</i>
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<i>Source</i>	<i>EB81.2</i>	<i>EB91.5</i>	<i>EB98.2</i>	<i>EB100</i>
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\* For data source for Hungarians in Transylvania: see table 1.

United Kingdom – EU state member until 2020

Croatia – EU state member from 2013

### 3.2. Trust in institutions

We consider trust one of the most relevant topics regarding the attitudes toward the EU. In the last fifteen years there has been a very significant change on this issue. While in 2014 a two-thirds majority (65 percent) of Hungarians in Transylvania trusted the European Union, in November 2023 this proportion had decreased to almost one quarter (28 percent). Compared with European averages these values are extreme. In 2014, Hungarians in Transylvania trusted the EU more than residents of any other member state, but in 2023 they would be at the bottom of a fictional ranking. There were recorded similarly low values of trust in the EU in France or Cyprus (35 percent) at the end of this year. There was also a significant decrease this year, with trust in the European Union dropping from 34 percent in spring to 28 percent by autumn.

The change is also significant compared to the total population of Romania. Although the Romanian average also shows a downward trend between 2014 and 2023, the absolute majority of Romanians (52 percent) still have confidence in the European Union. The situation is very similar in Hungary too, where 49 percent trusts the EU.

It is also an important observation that despite the significant decline, trust in the EU continues to exceed the trust index of political institutions at the nation-state level (parliament, government, president of the state) among Hungarians in Transylvania.

While the decline in trust of EU was generally high, it was most significant among the elderly and those with lower educational attainment between 2014 and 2023.

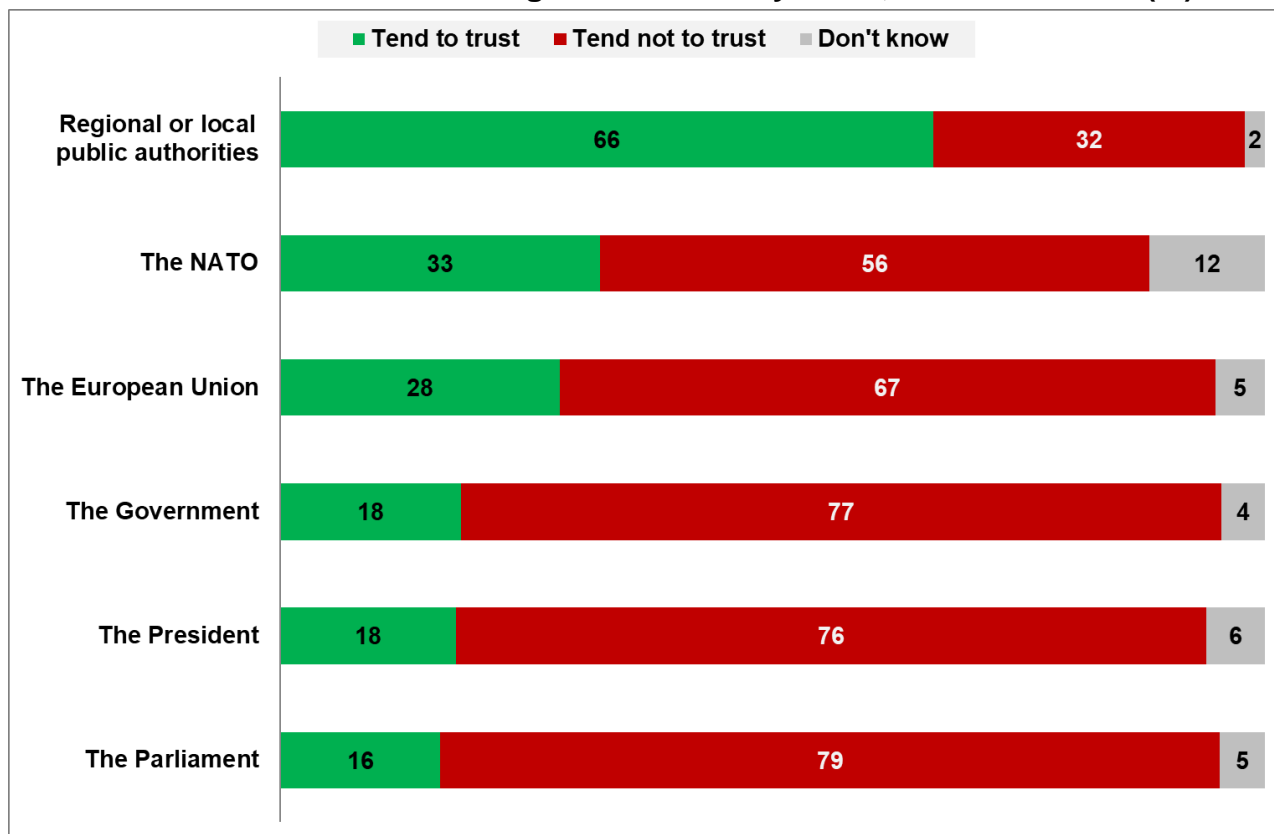
A two-thirds majority of Hungarians in Transylvania have confidence in regional or local public authorities, according to the poll of November 2023. Although the level of trust in local institutions was already high in 2014, it was preceded by trust in the European Union. The trust in local public authorities was increasing almost continuously, Hungarians in Transylvania are most committed to local and regional institutions in 2023. The trust in local governments is higher than in the Romanian majority, and it also exceeds the averages in Hungary and Europe.

Next in line is the trust in NATO, 33 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania trusting the intergovernmental military alliance. It is important to note that the level of trust in NATO among Hungarians in Transylvania is very low compared to the Romanian and EU averages as well.

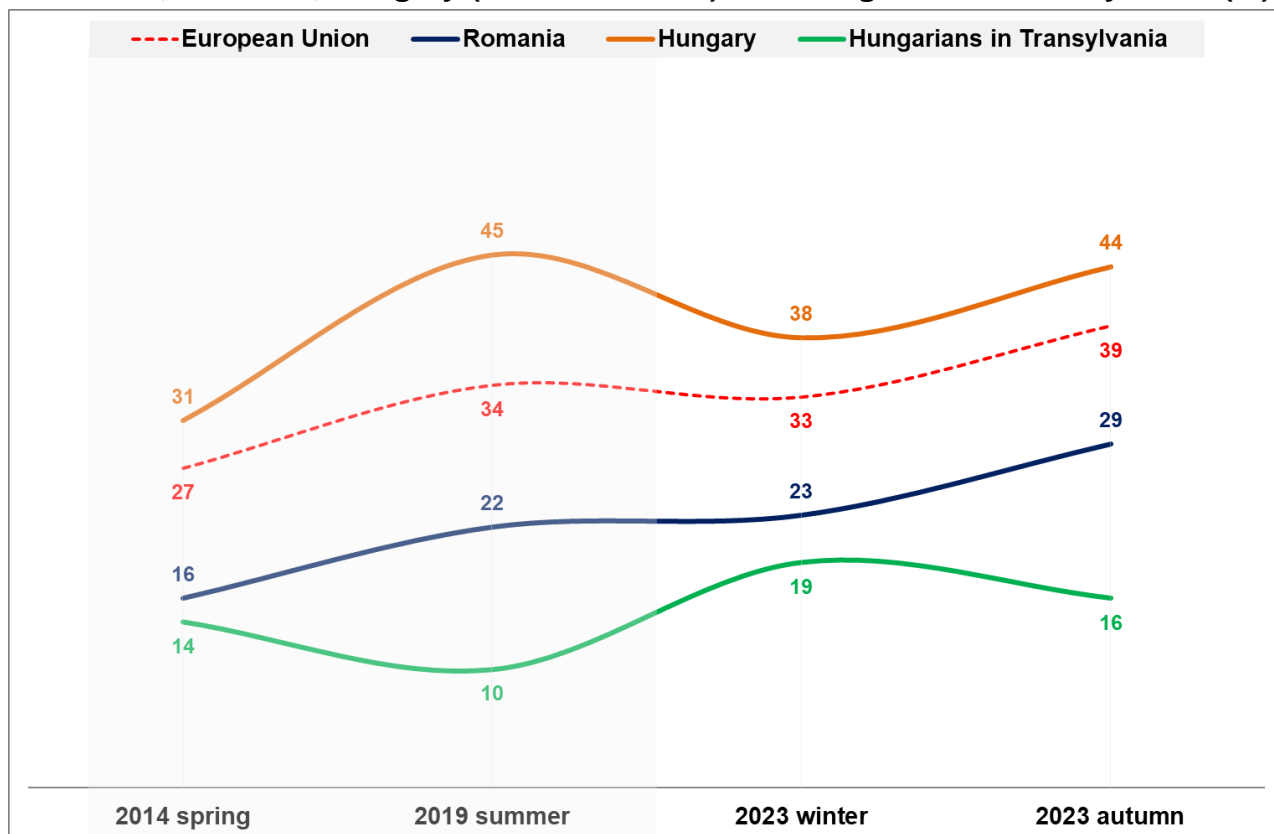
Hungarians in Transylvania have less trust than the EU in the Romanian government, president and parliament – the most important state institutions. Only 18 percent of them trust the government and the president, 16 percent trust the parliament. Trust in political institutions at the nation-state level has not shown a clear trend over the past ten years, but rather a continuous fluctuation, most likely linked to the evolution of the country's domestic politics.



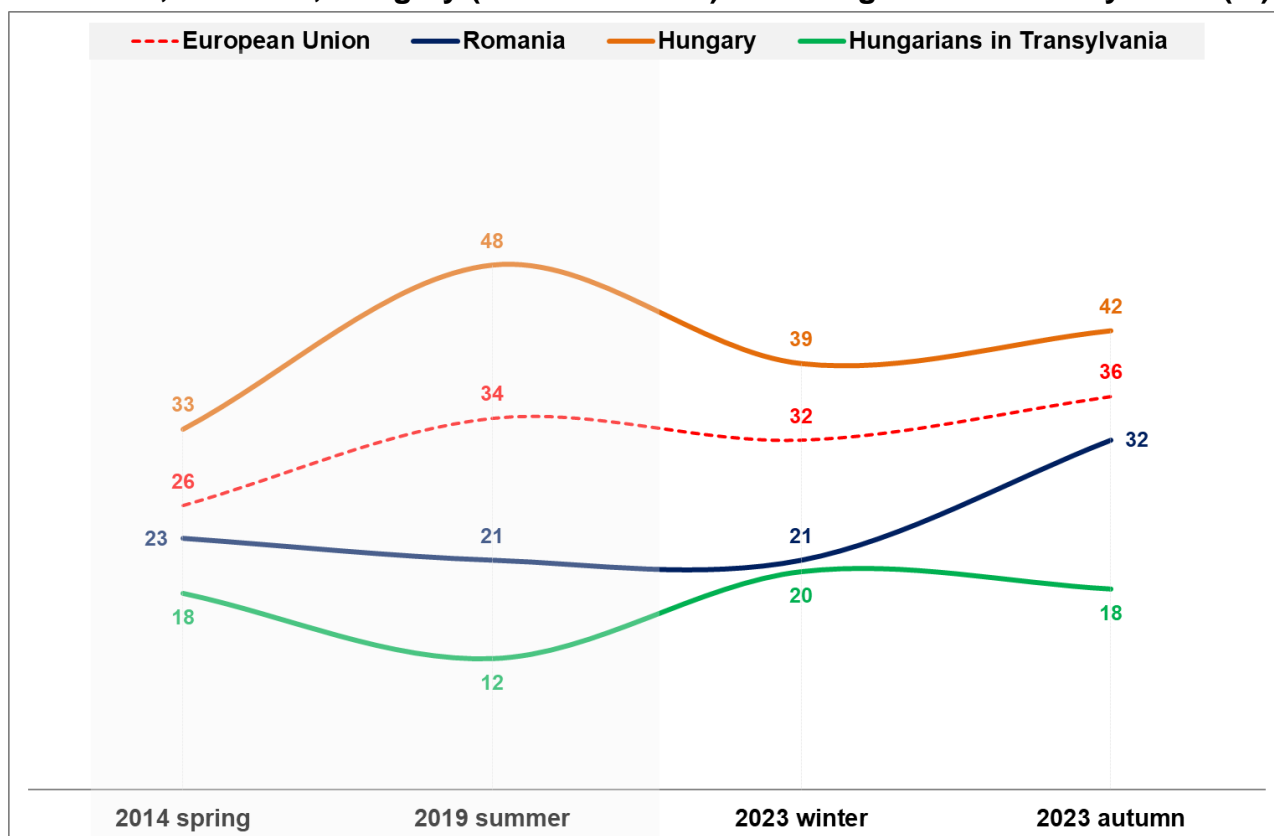
### 15.Trust in institutions. Hungarians in Transylvania, November 2023 (%)



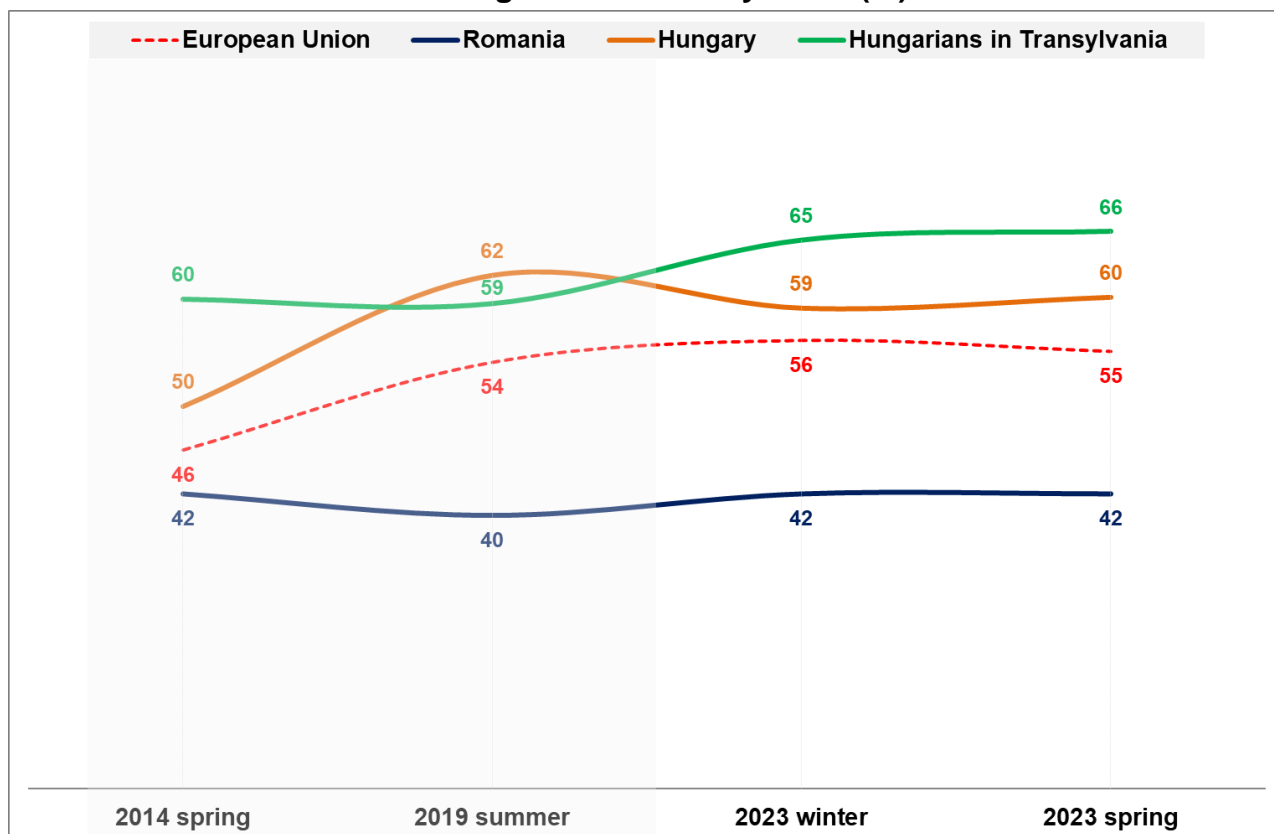
### 16.How much trust you have in the parliament? Share of trusting population: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)



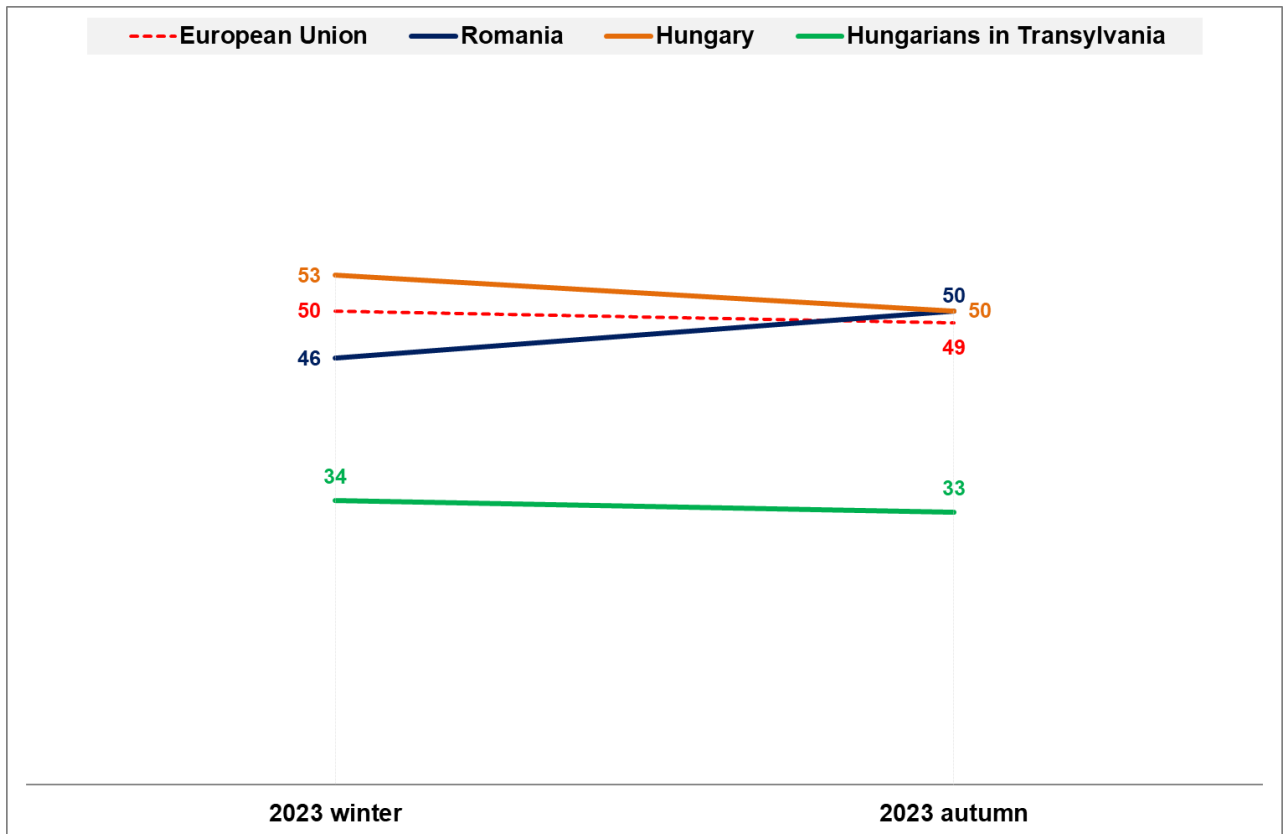
**17. How much trust you have in the government? Share of trusting population: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)**



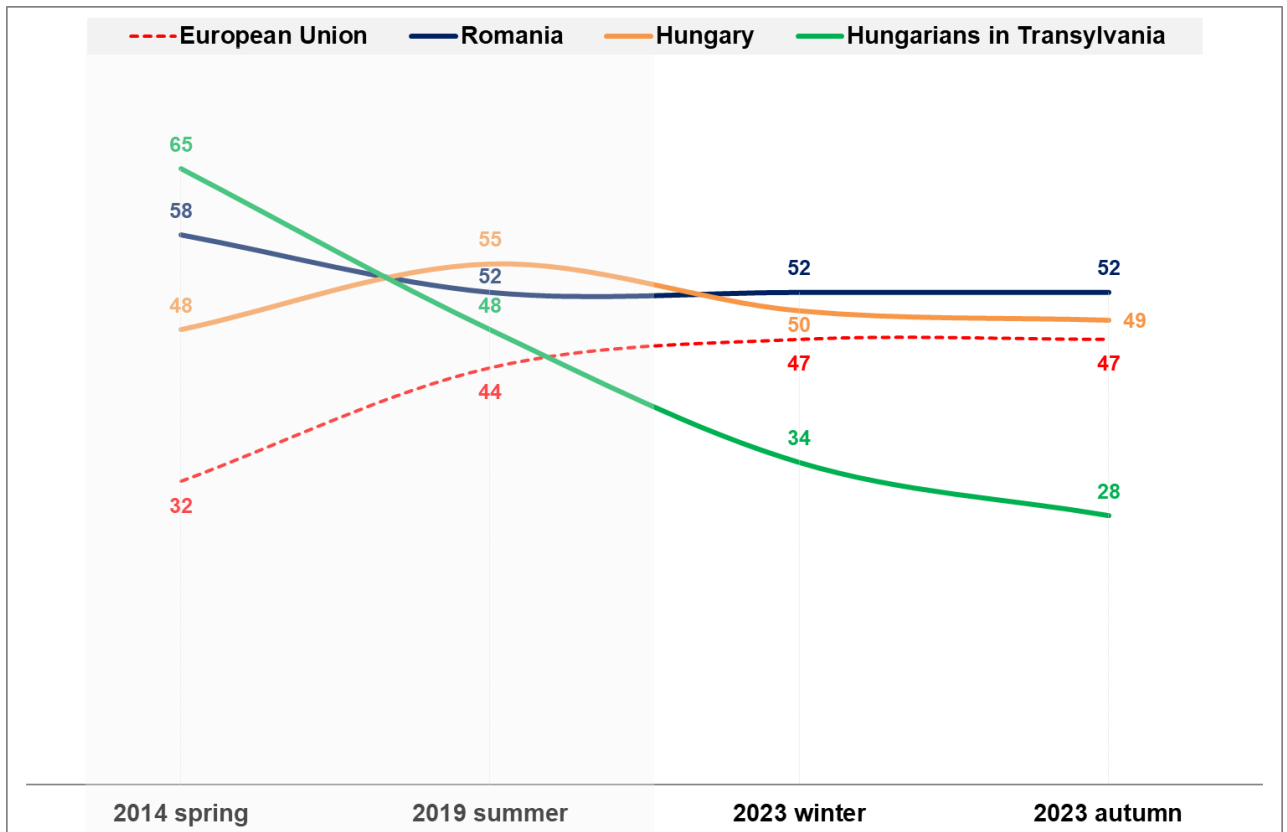
**18. How much trust you have in the regional or local public authorities? Share of trusting population: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)**



**19. How much trust you have in the NATO? Share of trusting population: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)**



**20. How much trust you have in the European Union? Share of trusting population: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)**



## 21. Share of population trusting the European Union (%)

	2014 spring	2019 summer	2023 winter	2023 autumn ↓
Denmark	46	68	71	68
Sweden	44	56	63	68
Lithuania	52	72	64	63
Malta	49	56	64	61
Finland	50	58	57	60
Luxembourg	45	59	57	58
Ireland	34	54	61	57
Netherlands	41	59	57	57
Latvia	37	51	58	54
Portugal	26	57	65	54
Poland	44	54	58	53
Romania	58	52	52	52
Bulgaria	55	55	45	51
Croatia	38	46	52	51
Belgium	49	51	49	50
Hungary	48	55	50	49
Germany	31	48	45	48
Slovakia	45	44	37	48
EU average	32	44	47	47
Austria	37	52	44	46
Estonia	58	60	46	46
Italy	19	37	44	43
Spain	24	47	45	42
Greece	18	32	37	39
Czech Republic	37	36	44	38
Slovenia	37	45	40	38
Cyprus	22	54	43	35
France	28	33	33	35
Hungarians in Transylvania*	65	48	34	28
United Kingdom	22	29	-	-

<i>Imaginary rank for Hungarians in Transylvania</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>
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<i>Source</i>	<i>EB81.2</i>	<i>EB91.5</i>	<i>EB98.2</i>	<i>EB100</i>
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\* For data source for Hungarians in Transylvania: see table 1.

United Kingdom – EU state member until 2020

Croatia – EU state member from 2013

**22. Proportion of those who trust the EU among Hungarians in Transylvania, and the rate of change, by background variables (%)**

		April 2014	November 2023	Rate of change
<b>Region</b>	Seklerland	66	27	-59
	Central Transylvania	65	29	-55
	Partium	64	30	-54
	Diaspora	65	28	-57
<b>Size of settlement (number of inhabitants)</b>	Under 1000	63	29	-54
	Between 1000-2500	66	28	-58
	Between 2500-15 thousand	62	29	-53
	Between 15-100 thousand	71	25	-64
	Over 100 thousand	65	31	-52
<b>Gender</b>	Male	63	29	-54
	Female	66	28	-59
<b>Age</b>	18–34 years	68	46	-33
	35–49 years	67	29	-57
	50–64 years	61	22	-64
	Above 64 years	63	17	-72
<b>Educational level</b>	Primary	57	26	-54
	Professional	64	25	-61
	High school	67	29	-57
	Higher education	71	41	-43
<b>Total sample</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>-56</b>

*\* Source: Surveys on Ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania: April 2014 and November 2023*

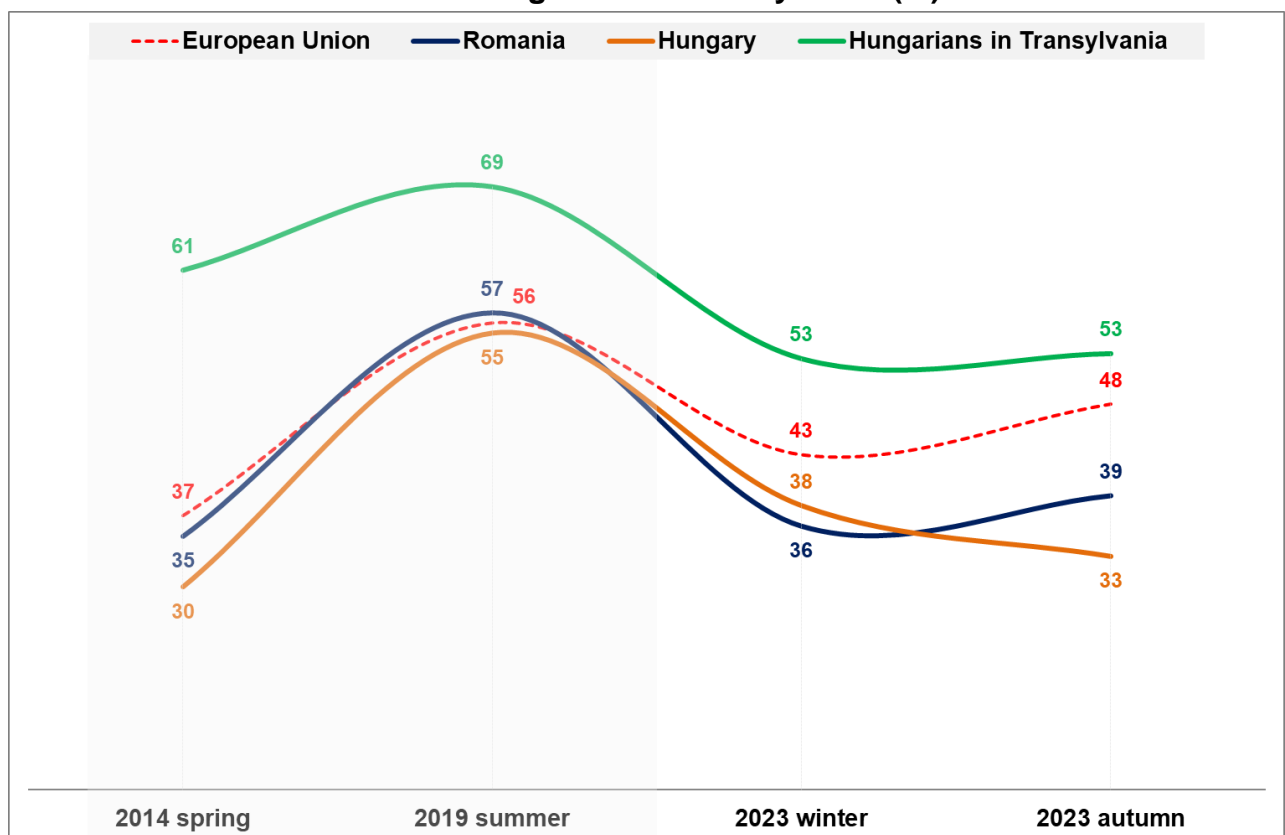
### 3.3. Self-Efficacy

In our analysis of attitudes toward the EU, we considered two other variables of the indicator named self-efficacy, the share of respondents who gave affirmative answers to the following two questions: „*My voice counts in the EU*” and „*I understand how the EU works*”. The analysis of political self-efficacy is important and relevant because according to the (rational choice theory oriented) scientific literature on the topic, it is one of the primary factors to directly contribute to voter turnout in elections. People are more likely to vote if they think that their vote counts and they are able to influence the politics and public affairs.

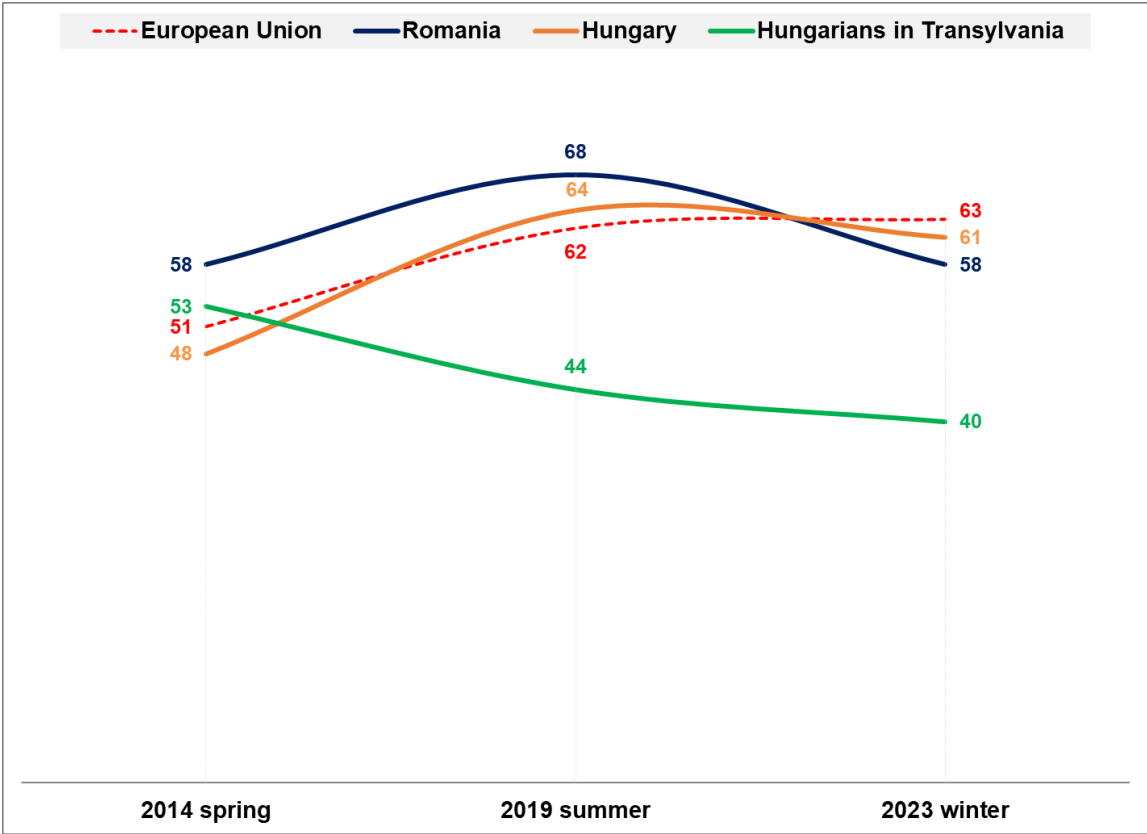
The research reflects that Hungarians in Transylvania still have a high level of confidence that their voice matters in the EU. Their 53 percent average is higher than the EU average of 48 percent, and higher than the result of Romania (39 percent) and Hungary (33 percent). It is important to point out that while the Romanian, Hungarian and EU averages have also improved slightly compared to 2014, the proportion of Hungarians in Transylvania who believe their opinion matters in the EU has decreased. The overall outlier results in 2019 are most likely due to the post-election nature of the surveys.

The proportion of those who said „*I understand how the EU works*” has been following a similarly fluctuating path in Romania, Hungary and the EU average, but shows a slight increase between 2014 and 2023. However, there has been a downward trend in the perception of Hungarians in Transylvania, with fewer and fewer Hungarians saying they understand how the EU works.

#### 23. My voice/vote counts in the EU: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)



24.I understand, how the EU works: European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)



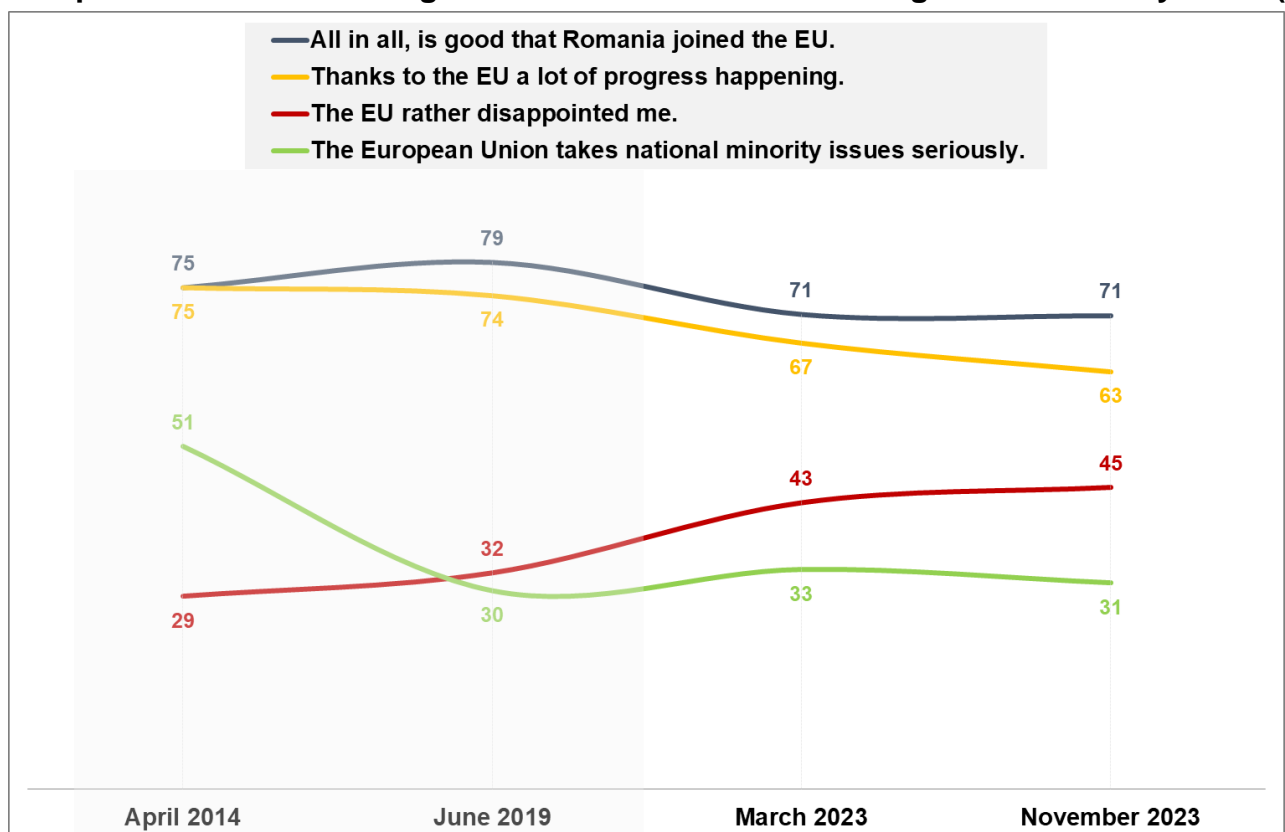
## 4. The Effect of Accession and the Opinions about Membership

Despite declining confidence, Hungarians in Transylvania continue to have a positive attitude towards Romania's EU membership. The proportion of those who think that *"all in all is good that Romania joined the EU"* is above 70 percent, and there is almost two-thirds majority of those who think that *"thanks to the EU a lot of progress happening"* (63 percent). However, for both statements the proportion of those who agree has slightly decreased between 2014 and 2023, and skepticism has increased in parallel: the proportion of those who are disappointed with the EU has risen from 29 percent to 45 percent.

From the perspective of Hungarians in Transylvania, we also considered it important to ask how they perceive the European Union's attitude towards the management of minority rights. In November 2023, less than a third of the respondents agreed with the statement that *"the European Union takes national minority issues seriously"* (compared to 51 percent in 2014). At the same time, 63 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania have a positive and 26 percent a negative view of the impact of accession on their own community. The proportion of critics on this question has also increased over the past years.

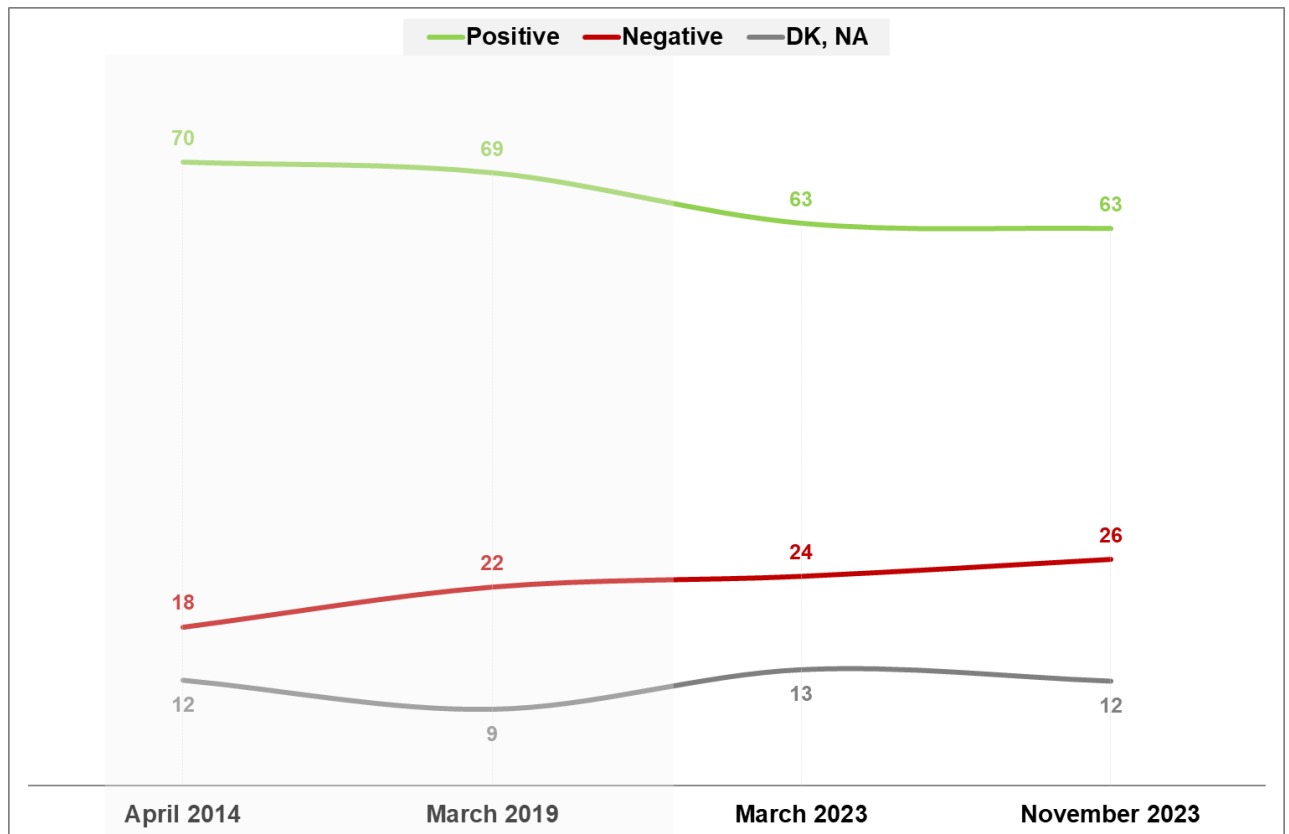
An important question in the membership is the proportion of the population that would support a possible exit from the supranational organization. The standard Eurobarometer question asks whether a member state *"could better face the future outside the EU."* In European comparison Hungarians in Transylvania do not appear to be particularly Euro-rejective, at about a quarter of them (27 percent) are agreeing with the above statement. This group is also larger in the EU average (28 percent) and in Hungary (29 percent), and in Romania it is above one third (38 percent).

### 25. Proportion of those who agree with some statements. Hungarians in Transylvania (%)

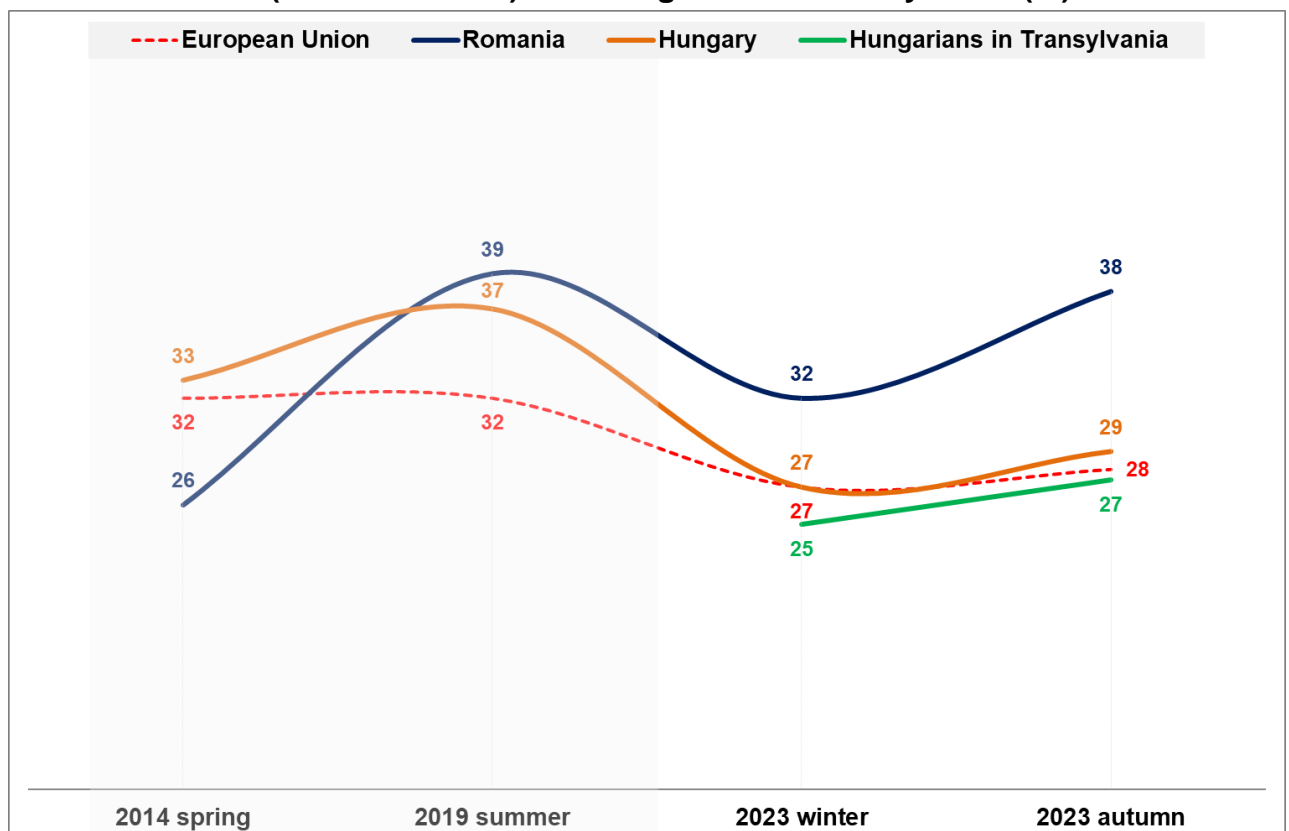




**26. What do you think, how Romania's accession to the European Union affects Hungarians in Transylvania? Hungarians in Transylvania (%)**



**27. Proportion of those who agree with the statement „Romania / [OUR COUNTRY] could better face the future outside the EU.” European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer) and Hungarians in Transylvania (%)**



**28. [OUR COUNTRY] could better face the future outside the EU.**  
**Proportion of those who agree with this statement (%)**

	<b>2014 spring</b>	<b>2019 summer</b>	<b>2023 winter</b>	<b>2024 autumn ↑</b>
Denmark	24	15	12	10
Finland	29	18	16	13
Netherlands	21	9	14	13
Lithuania	22	19	18	15
Ireland	26	30	17	16
Spain	25	27	21	18
Portugal	37	21	16	18
Sweden	35	21	23	20
Malta	24	16	15	20
Luxembourg	22	25	31	21
Germany	26	16	20	21
Slovakia	28	35	31	22
Estonia	21	18	18	23
Latvia	32	24	30	24
<b>Hungarians in Transylvania*</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>EU average</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
France	30	32	28	29
Greece	40	34	27	29
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>
Bulgaria	22	29	32	30
Belgium	28	37	33	31
Czech Republic	42	37	27	33
Austria	40	38	38	34
<b>Romania</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>38</b>
Croatia	39	40	41	40
Italy	38	44	36	40
Slovenia	42	48	42	41
Cyprus	51	30	38	42
Poland	35	47	40	47
United Kingdom	47	42	-	-

<i>Imaginary rank for Hungarians in Transylvania</i>	-	-	12	15
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<i>Source</i>	<i>EB81.2</i>	<i>EB91.5</i>	<i>EB98.2</i>	<i>EB100</i>
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\* \* For data source for Hungarians in Transylvania: see table 1., asked just in 2023

United Kingdom – EU state member until 2020

Croatia – EU state member from 2013

## 5. The Benefits and Drawbacks of Accession

During the autumn data collection, we also inquired about what the Transylvanian Hungarians consider the positives and negatives of EU accession. We repeated a set of questions already used in 2018 to see potential shifts in attitudes. The methodology of the two studies is the same, allowing to compare the results. The advantage of the comparison is that we can evaluate two datasets that were prepared six months before the 2019 and the 2024 European Parliament elections.

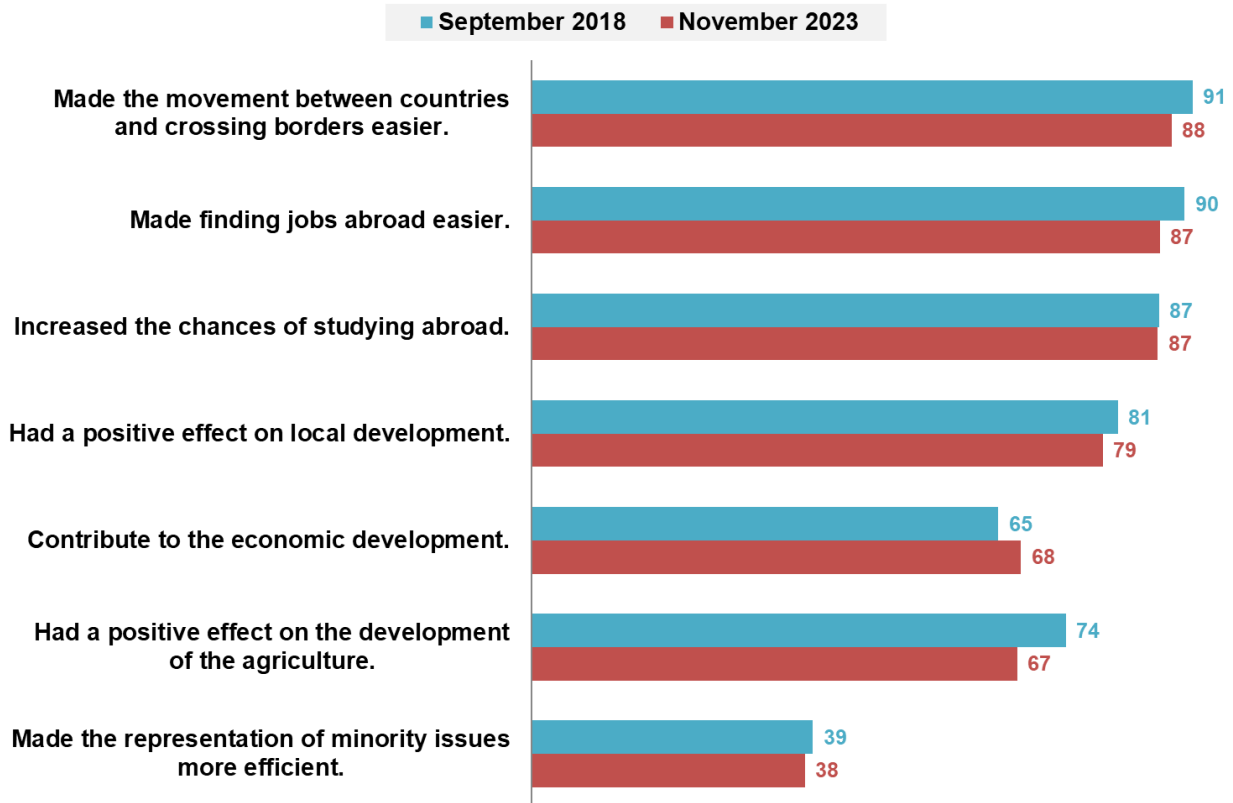
With regard to the results, the first important conclusion may be that there are no significant changes in perceptions for either the positive or negative effects. Slightly fewer people mentioned the advantages, and the disadvantages are more prominently highlighted, but the differences are not substantial. So, despite the general decline in the EU's perception (trust, optimism, direction) over the past five years, at the level of specific details, its impact is not yet apparent.

The overwhelming majority of Transylvanian Hungarians agree with the mobility benefits resulting from the accession: joining the European Union “made the movement between countries and crossing borders easier” (88 percent), “made finding jobs abroad easier” (87 percent), and „increased the chances of studying abroad” (also 87 percent). A second important benefit is linked to the economic progress: the idea of economic growth and development was associated with the EU accession: “had a positive effect on local development” (79 percent), “contribute to the general economic development” (68 percent), “had a positive effect on the development of the agriculture” (67 percent). The Hungarian community in Romania has expectations related to the protection and advancement of minority rights as a third main topic. Our statement related to this, stating that “the accession has made the representation of minority issues more effective”, was agreed upon by only 38 percent of our respondents.

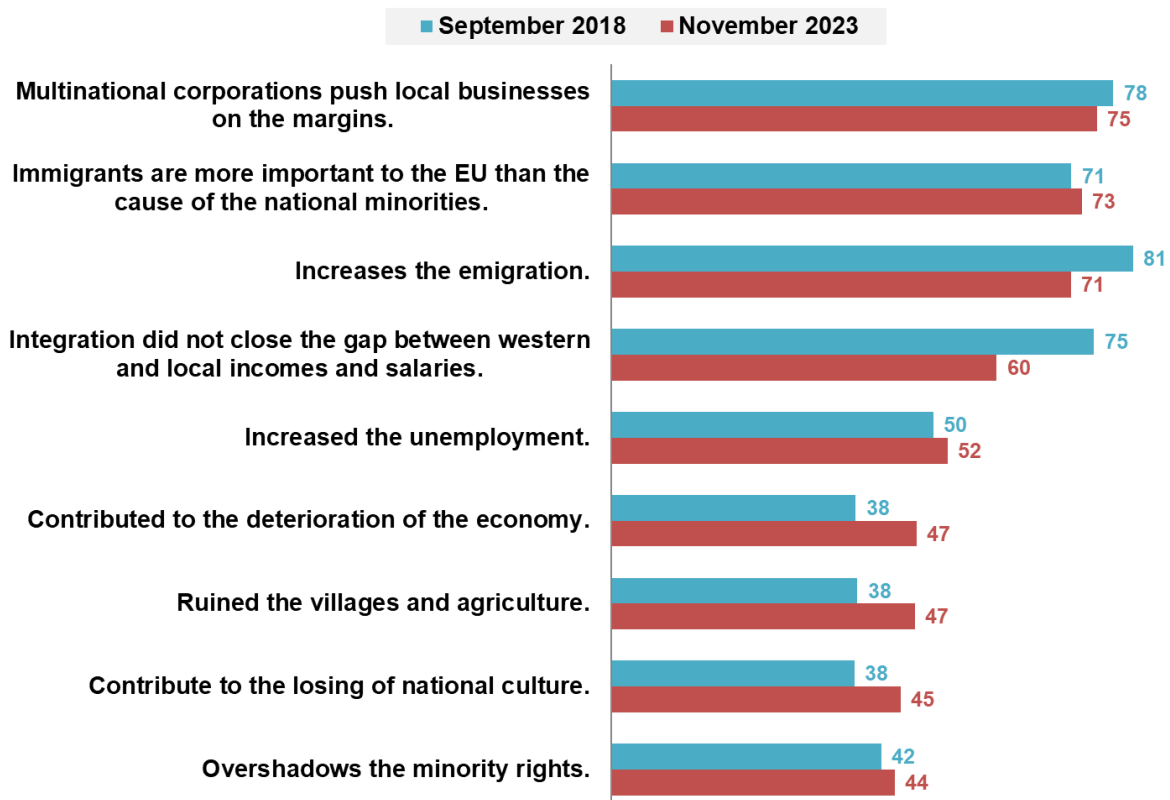
The disadvantages or dangers of accession can also be interpreted along these three dimensions. The ambivalent perception of the European Union is evident in the fact that when asked with a negative tone, opinions diverge from what was previously considered positive aspects. This contradiction is likely due to the high expectations of Transylvanian Hungarians prior to EU accession, and although there have been developments, a considerable share of the population is disappointed compared to their initial hopes. In the previous chapter, we saw that nearly half of our respondents (45 percent) expressed disappointment towards the European Union.

When it comes to actual attitudes, we observe that while previously about two-thirds of respondents acknowledged the economic benefits of EU accession, significant disapprovals are now being directed towards them. The most significant criticisms are that the “multinational corporations push local businesses on the margins” (75 percent think this way), then “integration did not close the gap between western and local incomes and salaries” (60 percent). However, 52 percent believe that the EU membership “increased the unemployment”, and 47 percent think it “contributed to the deterioration of the economic situation” and “ruined the villages, the agriculture”. There is also a negative attitude regarding free movement, suggesting that emigration is an important issue with serious consequences that was accelerated by joining the European Union (mentioned by 71 percent). The third dimension of attitudes, regarding minority rights, also shows predominantly negative opinions. As we've seen, only 38 percent agree that accession has made the representation of minority issues more effective. However, 73 percent believe “the EU considers immigrants more important than national minorities”, and a relative majority think it “contributed to the weakening of national culture” (45 percent), as well as “pushed minority rights issues into the background” (44 percent).

**29. Proportion of those who agree with the statements about the positive effects of joining the European Union? Joining the European Union... 2018 and 2023 (%)**



**30. Proportion of those who agree with the statements about the negative effects of joining the European Union? Joining the European Union... 2018 and 2023 (%)**



## 6. Perception of the Russia-Ukraine war

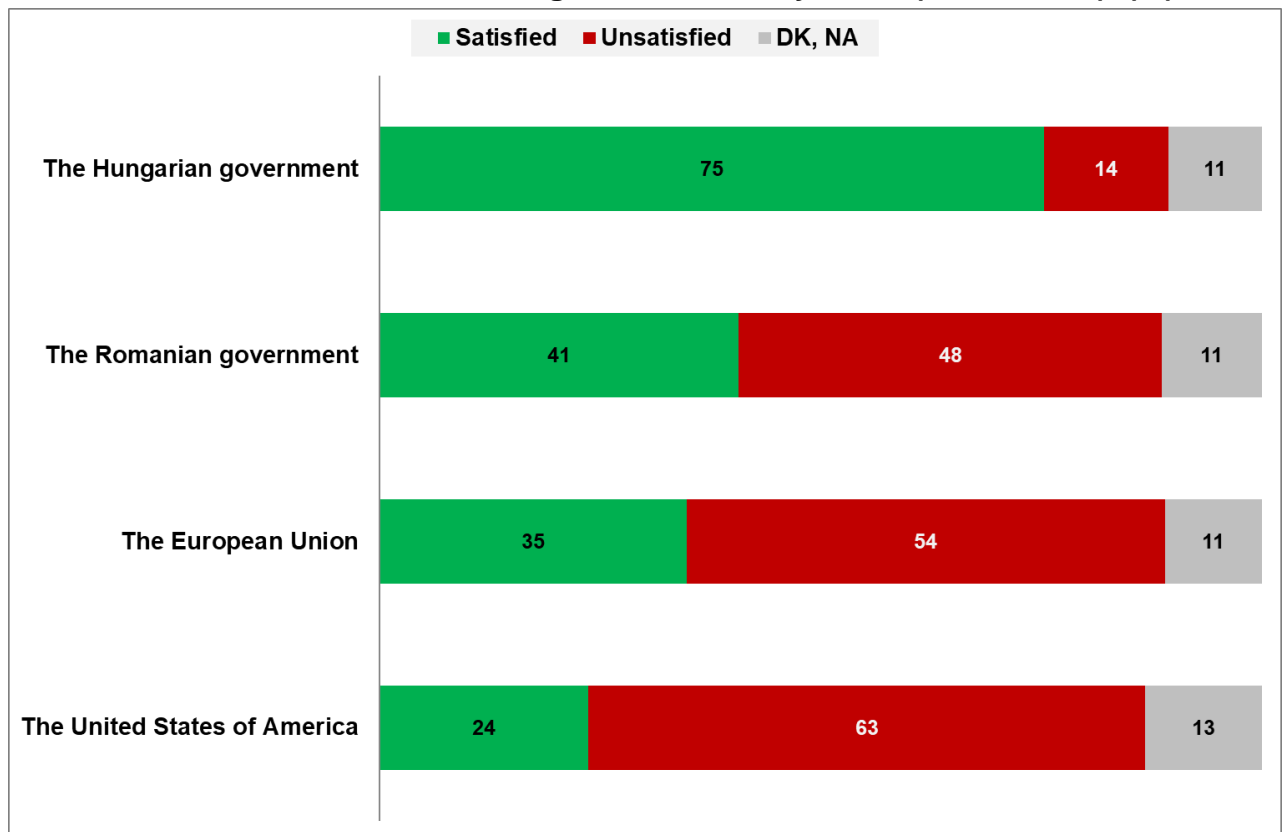
The attitudes of Hungarians in Transylvania towards the Russia-Ukraine war differ significantly from the European averages and the Romanian population as a whole. We asked this set of questions only in the spring survey. A relatively small group of them agree with the EU's war measures. Financial support for Ukraine is supported by 28 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania (the EU average is 77 percent), economic sanctions against Russia by 23 percent (EU average 74 percent), and military aid to Ukraine by just 14 percent (EU average 65 percent).

The picture is more nuanced because public opinion in the reference countries, both Romania and Hungary are significantly divided by the war. Although both countries have an absolute majority in favor the measures above, in European comparison these are relatively low supported.

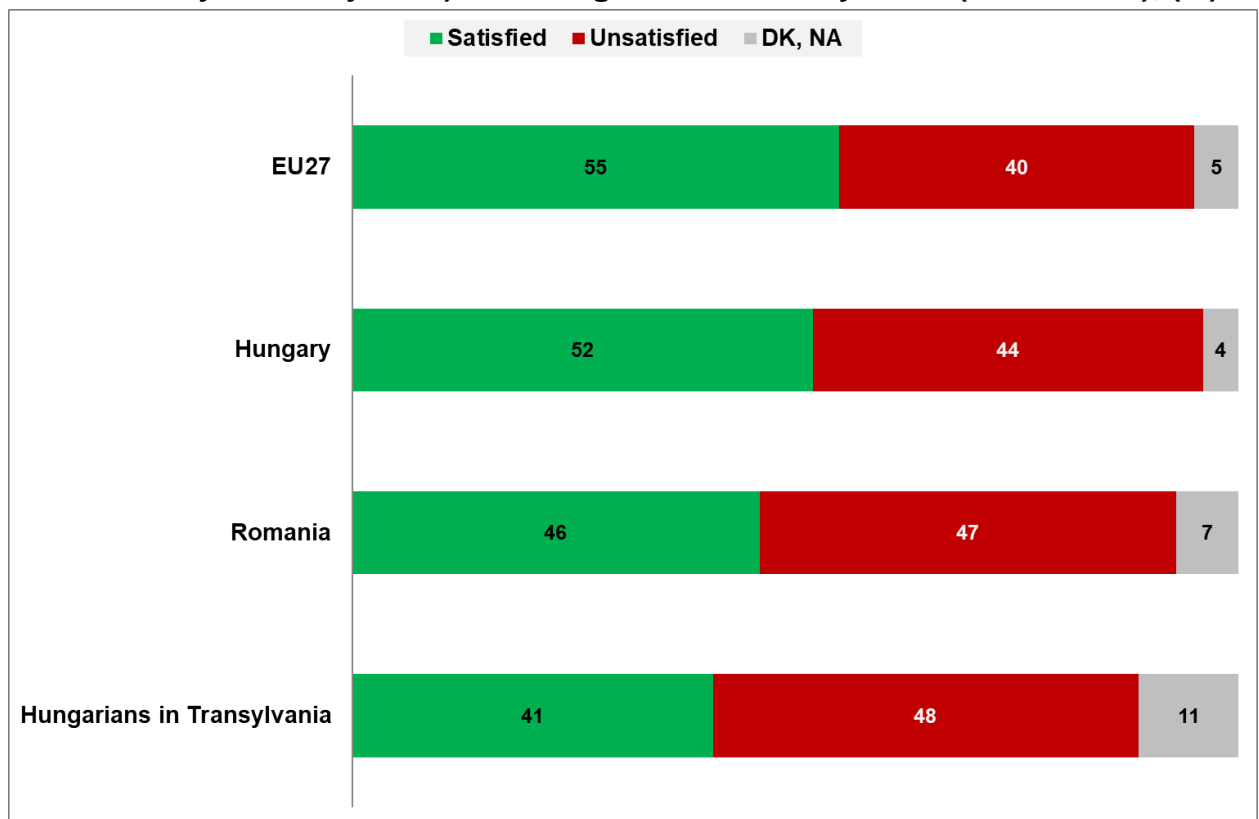
Hungarians in Transylvania mostly agree with the attitude of the Hungarian authorities towards the war (75 percent), while the Romanian government's response to the conflict is divided: 41 percent agree and 48 disagree with this. The European Union and the United States of America's attitude towards the war is rejected by a majority (54 percent and 63 percent, respectively).

However, it is important to note that the national and European responses to the war are dividing societies at the level of Romania, Hungary and the European community, roughly dividing them into two equal camps.

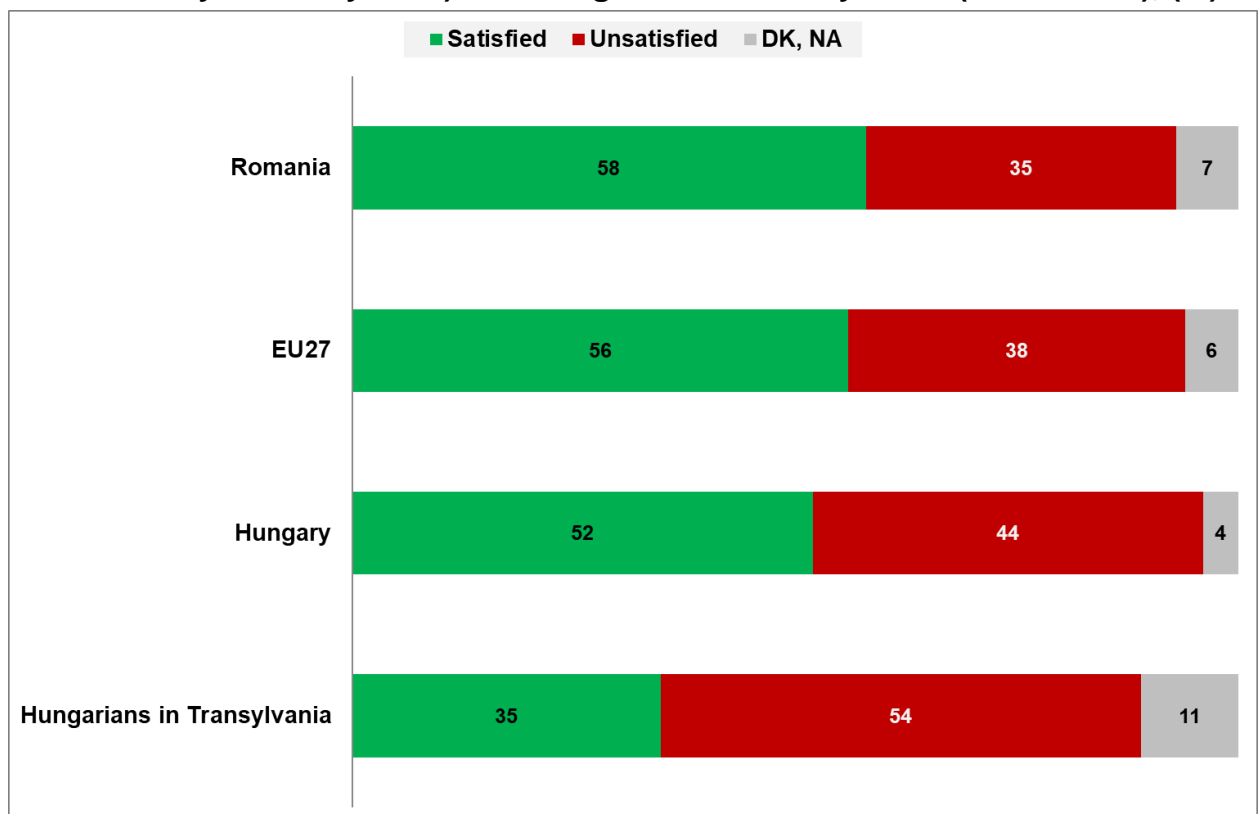
### 31. In general, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine? Hungarians in Transylvania (March 2023), (%)



**32. How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine by the government? European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer, January-February 2023) and Hungarians in Transylvania (March 2023), (%)**



**33. How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine by the European Union? European Union, Romania, Hungary (Eurobarometer, January-February 2023) and Hungarians in Transylvania (March 2023), (%)**



**34. Proportion of those who agree with actions. Eurobarometer (January-February 2023) and Hungarians in Transylvania (March 2023). The rank of the member states based on the average of the four actions (%)**

	Welcoming people fleeing the war	Financial support to Ukraine	Economic sanctions	Purchase and supply of military equipment
Sweden	97	94	95	92
Netherlands	98	93	89	90
Denmark	97	92	90	89
Finland	97	94	85	88
Lithuania	94	92	84	88
Poland	91	86	90	89
Portugal	94	88	89	82
Ireland	89	90	86	81
Malta	93	87	78	76
Croatia	91	83	82	73
Latvia	88	84	74	77
Spain	96	82	73	65
Luxembourg	96	76	75	64
Belgium	88	75	77	68
<b>EU average</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>65</b>
Germany	86	80	74	63
Estonia	88	72	71	72
Italy	88	76	74	56
France	88	68	65	60
Cyprus	95	81	53	49
Slovenia	89	72	61	52
Austria	79	71	69	50
Czech Republic	72	61	70	50
Hungary	86	61	56	50
Romania	72	59	67	55
Greece	95	66	55	36
Slovakia	81	53	49	38
Bulgaria	73	55	47	33
<b>Hungarians in Transylvania *</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>

<i>Imaginary rank for Hungarians in Transylvania</i>	25	28	28	28
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Statements:

Welcoming into the EU people fleeing the war

Providing financial support to Ukraine

Imposing economic sanctions on Russian government, companies and individuals

Financing the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine

## 7. Summary

The attitude of Hungarians in Transylvania towards the EU has eroded significantly over the years. While in April 2014 37 percent thought that things were going in the right direction in the EU, this has decreased to 14 percent by November 2023. Negative trends also include a significant increase in disillusionment, with 45 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania now expressing disappointment with the EU (compared to 29 percent in 2014).

The 28 percent confidence level in the EU hits also a low. In the survey periods conducted by us, it is the lowest, likely a historically low point. The perception of the EU among Hungarians in Transylvania is also very low compared to the member states. Hypothetically, if we put our November results into the October–November 2023 Eurobarometer ranking of the twenty-seven member states, Hungarians in Transylvania are in ultimate place in terms of trust in the European Union. Even France and Cyprus have a better perception of the EU with 35 percent confidence level. Understandably, the 28 percent confidence index is significantly below the EU average (47 percent) and low compared to 52 percent in Romania and 49 percent in Hungary as well.

But euroscepticism does not automatically mean hard Euro-rejectivism. A relatively small minority of Hungarians in Transylvania, around 25-27 percent, think that Romania would be better off in the future if it were not a member of the EU. With this figure, Hungarians in Transylvania are in the top third of countries committed to the EU, ahead of the EU average (28 percent), Hungary (29 percent) and Romania (38 percent). The majority of Hungarians in Transylvania recognize the benefits of accession, with 71 percent saying "all in all, is good that Romania joined the EU" and 63 percent saying that accession has had a positive impact on their own community.

On the positive side, EU funding is the main visible feature. 63 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania agree with the statement that "thanks to the EU a lot of progress happening", and in the open question supports, developments, funds were also the most frequently mentioned positive aspects.

Negative perceptions are also largely driven by economic issues. Basically, the current inflation crisis and the lack of money are reflected in the open question, and it is highly probable that dissatisfaction with the Russia-Ukraine war responses is also a contributing factor in this context. Hungarians in Transylvania may perceive the sanctions imposed in the wake of the war as both a trigger and a perpetuator of the energy crisis and high inflation.

The perception of the EU's relations with national minorities is also negative. An increasingly narrow group of Hungarians in Transylvania believe that "the European Union takes national minority issues seriously". The percentage of those who agree with this statement has decreased from 51 percent to 31 percent between 2014 and 2023. The continued rejection of the Minority SafePack initiative in recent years may have played a role in this. The Russia-Ukraine conflict is not immune to the issue of national minorities. Hungarians in Transylvania probably believe that Ukraine has not done enough for the Hungarian national minority from there, and it is also likely that in this logic, they sympathize also with the Russian minority in Ukraine. This is an important factor that may explain the rejection of mainstream Western discourse and actions on the war. The role of anti-Brussels political communication of the Hungarian government, which has a strong influence on Hungarians in Transylvania also cannot be neglected in this context.

In summary, the generally negative climate, the economic problems, the stagnating minority issues, the ongoing dispute between Hungary and Brussels all contribute to the growing euroscepticism among Hungarians in Transylvania.



In order to fully understand the picture and expose the underlying factors behind the changing attitudes of Transylvanian Hungarians, it is worthwhile to take a step back in time. Our earlier research shows that two-thirds of the total population as the majority of the Hungarian population living in Romania population had a positive perception regarding the Union following the accession. Their trust in the EU has been consistently high among countries in the Central and Eastern European region (77 percent in 2008). A comparative perspective on the Eurobarometer data shows that Hungarians in Transylvania had a higher level of trust in the EU than any member country. The extraordinarily positive attitude towards the EU may have played a significant role in shaping the results of the 2007 and 2009 European elections, when the Hungarian community in Transylvania was able to send 3 deputies to the European Parliament, exceeding by far its share as an ethnic group in the country. Political representatives of the Hungarian community, representing around 6 percent of the country's population, achieved around 9 percent in the two EP elections right after accession. This was a unique result compared to the results in any other election held in Romania.

What has happened in the past ten, fifteen years? To understand the reasons, it is worth considering the changes in four dimensions, as these are interconnected and collectively exercise their influence. The four dimensions are: a cultural perspective, an economic perspective, a minority policy perspective, and a political perspective. And for each dimension, the behavior of the actors influencing the public opinion of Hungarians in Transylvania needs to be taken into account. In order of influence, these are: the Hungarian state, the Romanian state and the European Union. From other surveys, we know that approximately 80 percent of Transylvanian Hungarians trust the Government of Hungary. However, from the current data collection, we see that support for Romanian state institutions is around 20 percent, and for the EU, it's around 30 percent.

**The cultural dimension** is defined by the fears that deepened among Hungarians in Transylvania due to the 2015-2016 migration crisis and the Hungarian government's communication criticizing Brussels' migration policy. After this, attitudes strengthened such as “the leadership of the EU imposes its will too much on member countries” (currently, 76 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania think this), “immigrants are more important to the EU than the cause of the national minorities” (73 percent), or that joining the European Union “contributed to the weakening/losing of national culture” (45 percent). But in the same register, we can categorize the partially economic attitude that multinational (foreign) companies have sidelined local entrepreneurs (78 percent). These issues can be considered a matter of sovereignty. On one hand, the fear of cultural homogenization has intensified (through supporting migration, spreading gender ideologies). On the other hand, this is further deepened by the perception that EU institutions do not address national minority issues with sufficient importance. One aspect of the Russian-Ukrainian war also affects these attitudes, in which Hungarians in Transylvania believe that minority rights are not guaranteed in Ukraine (neither for the Hungarian, nor the Romanian, nor the Russian minorities). It is important to emphasize that this narrative is entirely opposed, or at least runs parallel, to the mainstream Western discourse, which suggests that Ukraine is fighting for freedom, peace, and common European/Western values.

**The economic factors group** is similarly important. After EU accession, there were high expectations for fast economic development, catching up with Western European consumption standards, and achieving a higher standard of living. To understand their attitudes related to this, it is important to consider that the majority of Transylvanian Hungarians are concentrated in economically peripheral regions within Romania. They are more likely live in villages or smaller towns, demographically older, and among them, the proportion with higher education individuals and those working in high-status jobs is lower. From this

perspective, it is better understood that the 2008 economic crisis significantly broke the previous positive trends, and the crises of recent years (COVID, energy crisis, inflation crisis) have further increased the social dissatisfaction among Hungarians in Transylvania. The rise of pessimism had a major impact on the perception of the European Union, too. We could even say that, under current economic circumstances, a significant proportion still believes that “thanks to the EU, a lot of progress is happening” (63 percent). On the other hand, there is strong criticism that the gap between Western and local incomes has not decreased (75 percent). In other economic matters, the opinions are divided. According to 52 percent of Hungarians in Transylvania, after gaining EU membership, unemployment increased, and 47 percent think the economic situation and the situation of agriculture have deteriorated.

There has been a growing frustration with the role the Union has taken, particularly regarding **minority issues** as well. The proportion of those who believe that joining the EU would have made the resolution of minority issues more efficient declined from one year to the other. Currently, among Transylvanian Hungarians, there is a minority who believes that accession made the representation of minority issues more efficient (38 percent), and a relative majority who thinks it overshadows minority rights (44 percent). The attitude previously mentioned, stating that the EU cares more about immigrants than national minority issues, is very telling. In this matter, we can almost speak of complete consensus, as 73 percent of our respondents agreed with it in the fall of 2023. The frustrations likely stem from the fact that in recent years, European institutions have not addressed the issues of indigenous national minorities, and, in fact, the Minority SafePack initiative, launched with great effort, was rejected by the Commission in several steps. The fundamental dissatisfaction was further increased by the positive handling of the issues of immigrants (new minorities), as well as the marginal treatment of the violations of the rights of minorities in Ukraine by mainstream Western narratives.

**The political dynamics** have also moved the relationship between Hungarians in Transylvania and the EU in a negative direction. On one hand, the 2010 political turnover in Hungary resulted in significant changes. Following the regime change, a program of "virtual national reunification" was introduced, which included the modification of citizenship legislation and substantial financial support in education, cultural and economic sphere. The new citizenship law allowed members of trans-border Hungarian individuals to obtain Hungarian citizenship without residing in Hungary. The improving relationships with the kinstate, coupled with the Orbán government's critical stance towards certain European issues, has inevitably influenced the attitudes of Transylvanian Hungarians towards euroscepticism. Important to note for understanding is that most Hungarians in Transylvania get informed from Hungarian media sources rather than Romanian ones. In this context, however, it is essential to consider that despite government criticisms, the population of Hungary has remained significantly pro-European, with the absolute majority trusting EU institutions. This contradiction suggests that additional negative factors contribute to euroscepticism among Transylvanian Hungarians. We already have discussed the economic impacts and the situation of minority issues.

But also important are the changes that have occurred in the political landscape of Romania. In Romania, uncertainty towards the West is on the rise. According to Eurobarometer results trust in the EU has decreased, are those viewing NATO positively was in the minority in February 2023, more than one-third support the idea of leaving the EU, and responses to the war are divided in perception. When comparing public opinion in Hungary and Romania, it is likely that Romanian society is more receptive to EU- and Western-mainstream-skeptical attitudes than Hungarian society. The previous characterization of the Romanian population as slightly more Western-friendly is probably due to the fact that criticisms and opposing views towards the European Union and the United States was less articulated in the political space and public discourse here. However, the slow changes that have occurred in recent years, primarily driven by the Eurosceptic discourses of Liviu Dragnea (former Social Democratic Party leader) since 2018, and

the current accelerating shifts, especially with the rise of AUR (Alliance for the Union of Romanians, a right-wing populist, nationalist, anti-minority and anti-European political party), are starting to have an impact. It should be considered that the previously unquestioned pro-Western attitudes might become a minority scenario.

Given the growing Euroscepticism in Romania, it is likely that Hungarians in Transylvania, who are generally more responsive to political messages coming from Hungary, have entered a dual spiral, further reinforcing their skepticism towards Western mainstream discourses.

To sum up, we may say that the Hungarian minority in Romania has found itself in a sovereignty dilemma. On the one hand, they feel that their culture is under threat, their economic development is only marginally supported, and their minority situation is overlooked by the European Union. On the other hand, these trends are moving in an unfavorable direction in Romania as well. In this context, the majority of them turn their attention to Hungary, expecting and accepting any solutions from there. If there are no positive changes at the European level, the likelihood is high that euroscepticism will further increase among them.