*Information about interviewee:*

*The interview was an official at the National Strategy Research Institute (NSKI) in Budapest, Hungary. The interviewee wished to remain anonymous. The Interview was conducted Budapest, Hungary.*

*R= Respondent – Anonymous NSKI Official*

*I=Interviewer – Sam Wrighton*

I: Can you please describe the primary functions of your institute?

R: Engage with research in the fields of ethnography, geography, sociology, economics and international relations of cross-border ties with a focus on the Carpathian basin. Nation is a complicated term. In Hungarian means nationality not necessarily attached to a nation-state

I: How would you describe the relationship between the Hungarian state and the Hungarians living abroad?

R: Quite intensive at the moment. Always been strong. Depends on political ideology- right now we have a right-wing government who wishes to strengthen these relationships. Historically determined relationship. New feature in this relationship is the new constitution of Hungary.

I: Why does the Hungarian state wish to engage with their external population?

R: Historical reasons. The current borders are not what they used to be say 100 years ago. Many Hungarians are separated by these borders. The case is similar to Russia but different historical context. Family linkages across the borders. There has always been frequent migration. 3-4% of Hungarians living in Hungary were born outside (c.a 300,000). Cultural issue. Responsibility. Need for cultural cooperation.

I: How does the state engage with these populations?

R: In the last 5 years this has changed. Formerly this was a cultural focus with some economical programmes. Now economic considerations. 2015 – New economic development programme. International cooperation with focus on Central Europe. Neighbours – Hungarian formulates this cooperation.

I: Who acts as the intermediators?

R: Don’t know? Trade houses – Helping Hungarians firms find partners. NGOs managing process. Banks in financial – subsidies/grants/loans. Focus on Vojvodina and Saka…. (Western Ukraine). Slovakia and Slovenia next EU cohesion fund available in EU. Need to define a gap. More focussed and more sources.

I: What are the priorities for these policies?

R: Agriculture. Food processing. Rural areas. Cooperation between firms. Tourism – rural. Small investments

I: To what extent does Hungary support Hungarian national minority parties?

R: Some cooperation. Formal channels of cooperation. Hungary supports the Hungarian permanent congressional forum/committee. All Hungarians are partners. Relationship is good but not always. Fragmented political parties. Tries to maintain good relationship with all partners. Ideology splits this. Since 2010 focus on maintaining good relationship with Hungarians living abroad. Education, institutions, healthcare.

I: To what extent does the Hungarian state support further autonomy of regions with large Hungarian populations?

R: Yes, there is support but the problem is there are no centres any longer, just narrow strips. Yes, it would be nice for these strips to have territorial autonomy, but it is not a priority. Hungarian populations are fragmented in many regions – so this is not so strong. Székely Land in Romania may have an opportunity. Administrative units in Ukraine – why not? It’s not a complicated issue there. No chance and no intention elsewhere. So sensitive no one says anything. Take these issues very seriously. Carefully articulate position. But Hungarian state supports these issues. 1950s Stalin – some autonomy. Vojvodina might get regional autonomy – strong regional identity.

I: The 2010 citizenship legislation. Has this affected migration?

R: No data. Gave people a good opportunity which many have taken. They have Hungarian citizenship so we cannot call them immigrants. It was not the intention to affect migration Formerly the target country was Hungary now they wish to remain. We need to maintain our population there. But the policy is not always coherent but there is a lack of labour force in Hungary. It was not the intention to affect migration but in Transylvanian there is no chance to maintain population long term, therefore it may be better they move to Hungary.

I: Does Hungary support the election campaigns of Hungarian national minority parties?

R: The official answer is no. There is a declaration of support but there always is a political intention. Formerly they prefer one party over another. Do they invite Bridge Party (Slovakia) or not to the Hungarian permanent commission? Slovakian minority – just cultural. We would like more political engagement

I: Is there an ideal situation the Hungarian government would like to achieve?

R: Hungary sees the Hungarians living abroad as a valuable economic resource. These are special areas populated by Hungarians and Hungary has an ability to network and gain influence in these territories because of the relationship with the Hungarians living there. Nation has a different meaning in Central Europe.