



The American Hungarian Federation

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The American Hungarian Federation Supports Hungarian Dual Citizenship Law, Rebukes Unjustified and Baseless Criticism

On June 4, 1920, over 3 million Hungarians were transferred to foreign rule and forced to renounce their Hungarian citizenship as a result of the punitive Treaty of Trianon. By the terms of that diktat, Hungary also lost 72% of its 1000-year old territory and countless natural resources. Borders were arbitrarily redrawn around historic communities, lands confiscated, and families separated for generations. As we see in the recent Slovak language law, the blatant discrimination and minority rights abuses continue to this day.

In May, 2010, a few weeks before the 90th anniversary of the tragic treaty, the Hungarian Parliament overwhelmingly (344 voted yes, 3 voted against, and 5 abstained) passed a law granting citizenship to millions of Hungarians living in neighboring countries in former Hungarian lands. Slovakia, home to more than 500,000 ethnic Hungarians (10% of the population), has condemned this law. The Slovak condemnation is hypocritical, unjustifiable, and only consistent with the pattern of xenophobia and scapegoating for political expediency.

The right-wing government of Slovakia under Robert Fico, supported by radical ultra-nationalist Jan Slota who has called Hungarians the “cancer of the Slovak nation” who should be forcibly removed, inexplicably reaffirmed the Benes Decrees in October 2007. In June 2009, Slovakia passed a law making the use of the minority language in official communication punishable in towns and villages where the ethnic community makes up less than 20 percent of the total population. Slovakia is now threatening to strip Slovak citizenship to those ethnic Hungarians who accept dual citizenship. These discriminatory laws have no place in 21st Century Europe.

Particularly concerning is the hypocrisy shown by the governments of Slovakia as they themselves permit dual citizenship. Further, the Hungarian government permits dual citizenship for ethnic Slovaks residing in Hungary. Dual citizenship is an accepted practice and poses no threat to national sovereignty. Germany granted citizenship to ethnic Germans residing in Western Poland, Rumania to ethnic Rumanians in Moldavia, and Slovakia to ethnic Slovaks in Hungary to name but a few.

Hungarians have been divided across artificial lines for too long. During much of the more than 40 years of communist regimes, it was taboo in Hungary to discuss the grievances of the Hungarian minorities... The American Hungarian Federation welcomes this recent Act of Parliament. As Americans who enjoy the rights to US citizenship regardless of where we live, we demand the same liberties for others and urge Slovakia to reject discriminatory laws and respect human and minority rights.

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