



**STRENGTHENING AND ACTIVATING  
SMALL COMMUNITIES OF  
NORTHEAST HUNGARY  
PROJECT PRESENTATION**

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# The power of collaboration

## HOW DO WE STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY COHESION?

We launched our initiative called "Strengthening and activating small communities of Northeast Hungary" three years ago, on 1st May 2017. In this project every year we cooperate with 15-17 civil society organizations, small rural communities, schools, etc. in the North-Eastern region of Hungary to assist them in enhancing social engagement in their communities.

At the beginning we have organized several workshops and meetings for all, to get to know each other, and learn about the concept and practices of volunteering, its legal framework, and the process of recruiting, involving, managing and evaluating volunteers.

In addition during a three-day long interactive, practice oriented training session participants were prepared how to assess those challenges that affect their communities the most, and as a response how to plan and implement local collaborative solutions in the form of so-called mini-projects.

As a result, nearly 30-40 community events, local actions were designed and implemented successfully by our collaborators in each year fostered by the professional assistance of the mentors involved and the small financial support provided by the Carpathian Foundation.

Now, we would like to proudly present and share some of the most inspiring initiatives that can serve as a good model for other communities, settlements and CSOs intending to strengthen the cohesion of their communities.

This activity was implemented within the framework of the Carpathian Foundation's project entitled "Strengthening and activating small communities of Northeast Hungary" (EFOP-1.3.5-16-2016-00915).

The project is implemented with the support of the European Union, co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Hungarian Government.



# CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMUNITY "SUMMER HOUSE"



As a community initiative, in the autumn of 2018, the Association for Village Builders built a filagoria (extensive addition) to the small community house, used by the organisation, so they could organize community programs outside in the summer heat.

The property is owned by the local government, so the planning first began with a visit to the mayor and the local body authorized the construction of the filagoria.

Then Tímea, the spirit of the local community, approached a local carpenter with this idea to whom she told her plans, asking his help in creating a blueprint, listing the material requirements and carrying out the construction works. He gladly accepted the assignment



and also fulfilled the requests by the appointed date as a volunteer. Raw materials were largely purchased with the financial contribution of the Carpathian Foundation at the timber depot of Eger, which was transported with the help of local volunteers to the little village, Bükkszentmárton.



After that, the construction works were announced to the villagers through posters and leaflets and they consulted the professionals again, the construction started at the appointed time. The village's entire populace was involved in the community work and the summerhouse was created within a two-days' timeframe, in the shade of which, they can hold great outdoor programmes primarily for local children.



# LITTLE BEAR CUBS FOR REGIONAL COHESION

The Little Bear Cub Mom and Baby Public Benefit Association is based in Szihalom and was established in 2006 with the aim of helping the lives of (expectant) mothers and children in Szihalom and the area of Füzesabony with complex services; their permanent events are world breastfeeding day, civil expo, Santa Claus Day event. In addition to their regular programs, their permanent service is online social information counseling, through which their professionals answer questions from those in need. Numerous volunteers help their work and the implementation of their events and initiatives in close cooperation with several regional non-governmental organizations and institutions. They have also been cooperating with the Carpathian Foundation for many years.

They took part in present project in 2017-2018, when a regional health day and a Santa Claus day event were implemented for disadvantaged children in Szihalom. Both events were realized with the help of their volunteers, a lot of people help their work, most of the performers, organizers, photographers, buffets, program organizers, dancers, face painters volunteer to organize community events. The organization of the events was supported by local entrepreneurs on both occasions with their donations of both material and food, as well as by Hungarian Warehouse of Szihalom with a voluntary donation to help organize the events. The Association is able to mobilize the local community in an outstanding way, and many people are happy to be involved in the process of both implementation and organization.

The regional health day was held in Szihalom in the Hungarian Warehouse with the participation of 156 people, where Feri Pál gave a lecture on the importance of our health, in addition to several sports demonstrations: yoga, aerobics, gymnastics, etc., the little ones had fun with glitter painting and other toys, while the older children could take part in blood sugar measurements and health advice, and in addition to quality entertaining performances, they could taste healthy food as well.

The Santa Claus Day celebration was held on two days this time, the first occasion was held in Szihalom on December 8, 2017 in the Hungarian Warehouse, where all the local children were catered with hot cake, tea and cocoa. Babszem Jankó Children's Theater captured the children's attention with an interactive performance about the spirit of Christmas. In the creative corner,



several craft gifts could be made, such as Christmas knockers, decorations that the children could take home. To the surprise of the little children, a minibus arrived from Eger, which transported them around the settlement. At the end of the event, the long-awaited Santa Claus arrived, handing out gift packages to all the "good" children. The next day of the event, the association "Good Fairy Service" delivered Santa Claus packages to disadvantaged children in Füzesabony and Besenyőtelek so that no one would spend the holiday in the area in deprivation.

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## COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP AT THE BÉKE SETTLEMENT

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE “BÉKE-SETTLEMENT” operates in Felnémet district of the city of Eger, primarily at the Béke settlement (it is segregated Roma settlement). Its members have been actively involved in our project since its inception, and in

On the following occasion, organizers provided accurate information to the participants, people living here learned about the process of junk clearance, while the children could play in the garden of the community house used by the volunteers nearby.

After several discussions with the relevant garbage utilization firm, the exact date of the clearance was set. Afterwards everyone collected and containerized their own rubbish, finally the series were closed with cookouts.



2019 a community clean-up action was also organized by them. The heart of this work was not only to make the environment of this settlement more beautiful, but also to make the local families living here more responsible for working together to make their own place of residence more clean, and well-kept.

An important goal was to see how much change can be achieved if they come together and make a difference. The actual junk clearance was preceded by careful organisation, numerous discussions, visits to locals in their respective areas concluded by the volunteers of the association. During the first discussion, main local problems were identified, and the lack of payment of garbage fees was selected as the main reason for the messy surroundings.



The area became cleaner, the locals came closer together through cooperation and working together, and their children had a great time. Altogether, 120 local residents took part in the process and as a result, a 15 cubic meter container was filled with rubbish and junk.



# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND LOCALS TOGETHER IN SZAKÁLD

The Autistic Foundation of Miskolc has been providing care and training opportunities for young people with autism in and around Miskolc since 1992. In 2018, as part of a new investment, the Barka Social Farm was established in Szakáld, that awaits visitors with disabilities and members of the majority society with a ten-bed guest house and a service offering a special program package. The farm operates all year and employs ten new disadvantaged workers. They are mainly involved in hospitality, catering, animal husbandry, the production of welcoming delicacies such as dryings, jams and compotes, the preparation and implementation of handicraft traditional and therapeutic classes and other programs. The farm is pet-friendly, both guide dogs and pets can be hosted. With the establishment of the guest house, the goal of the Miskolc Autistic Foundation was to become "more visible" and better known, as well as to strengthen its efforts to break down social prejudices. Families raising children with disabilities and residents from partner institutions are expected in the first place for accommodation and special programs, but groups of children and work communities are also welcome.

In our project the foundation organized programs in Szakáld, which were attended by young people with autism, disability and local people from Szakáld, promoted the facility, tried to get to know each other and bring these two communities closer for long-term cooperation. Several craft classes were organized, one of the topics of the mini-project was the processing of grapes, from which jam, syrup, and must were made. In addition to the volunteers, young people with disabilities also assisted in the work, the grapes were crushed, pressed and then filtered. The finished delicacies could be tasted, and later they will be consumed as welcoming delicacies on the occasions of their future events.

For the second time, a vegetable helped the work of the Miskolc Autistic Foundation, pumpkins brought together young and old. Pumpkin carving is now a widespread Halloween program in Hungary as well, within the framework of which the young people of the foundation were joined by volunteers and the residents

of Szakáld, and then the works started in the yard of Barka Social Farm. The pumpkin seeds have been selected and dried, which will be suitable both for planting and as excellent bird food. The pumpkins were carved, each became different, and were adorned with shapes and faces. Meanwhile, roasted pumpkin could be tasted and pumpkin jam was cooked on the stove.



Halloween was followed by Advent preparations, which were held at the Farm on December 10, 2019. One of the educators of the Szakáld Primary School arrived with his little students, followed by the residents, the elderly and families with small children. Everyone worked in an integrated way with young people with disabilities. The event was held in a good mood, door decorations, Advent wreaths, Christmas tree decorations, and paper nativity scenes were prepared, and the participants talked to each other a lot.

Each event was preceded by careful preparations; in addition to the personal inquiry, an event was created on Facebook and flyers were also placed in the village to get more people informed and to join.

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# THE OPAL TALENT FOUNDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

The Opal Talent Foundation was founded in 2010. Its main aim is to support gifted (mainly Roma) children from disadvantaged and multiple disadvantaged backgrounds.

They try to help children from school age to college years so that they all can find their own place in the world. The work of the Opal Foundation is quite many-sided, just as the talents of the children they support. From fine arts through to sports and science they strive to put programs that reflect to the needs of children in almost every field of talent, as this can lay foundations for children's future.



With the help of the Carpathian Foundation, many mini-projects were implemented. During these mini-projects, they mainly wanted to present different methods of teaching to prospective educators that they can use in their later careers.

In November 2018, a smaller company of pedagogical students could participate in an acceptance-based training. Also in November of this year, other topics were the Jews and Romas - and how prospective teachers will be able to discuss these topics with elementary or high school students.

At the end of November, it was about being able to provide effective help as a volunteer "Helping well" taking into account the needs of the target group and the environment. In February 2019, the Opál Team also organized several mini-projects with the involvement of the Arany János Elementary School. Most of these projects were sport events aimed at drawing the attention of teachers and students to the importance of sports, and regular exercise; and as a secondary goal, to bring minority and majority societies closer through love of sports and physical activity.





## COOPERATION IN TOMOR TO MAKE TODDLERS SMILE

Although the Cserehát Roma Self-support Public Interest Association was established only in 2007, its members have been trying to organize community strengthening programs for the people living in Tomor since 1998. Their aim is to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged families living in the settlement and in the area, to build and strengthen social cohesion in the communities of Tomor, Lak, Homrogd, through the implementation of community-building and development programs, helping young mothers in particular who are struggling to find a job in the absence of a crèche building and therefore there is no person who can take care of their children.

Their other goal is to support young, teenage parents and mothers, to prepare them raising children, improve their parental competence. In Tomor, they organize their excursions, and programs for the children at the local community center. The organization organized two events as part of our project.

For the first time, a community fair was held, where goods (second-hand clothes, toys, household utensils, etc.) were delivered and received to the by the so-called Donation Taxi to the Chance House of Homrogd from which the local residents could buy at 50 and 100 forint price tags and the help was reciprocal, as the proceeds were used to support the Association's Child Smile project.

Within the framework of the Child's Smile program (which is also implemented with the support of the Carpathian Foundation), early childhood development is provided for 30 disadvantaged children in the 3 settlements involved, during which the child-rearing and child-care competencies of young parents were strengthened, while professionals (kindergarten teacher, physiotherapist, mental health professional, etc.) help children's development basis on their needs.

The next event was a community program for children and parents involving in the Children's Smile program, a carnival party during which children had the opportunity to dress up in costumes and show themselves to one another.

In addition to the show, a dance competition and raffle were also held. It was a great opportunity to bring the community together, making everyone feel comfortable and welcomed.



# THE STONE CULTOUR OF BÜKKALJA WITH KAPTÁRKŐ ASSOCIATION

The Kaptárkő Association was founded in 2003, with only 15 members. Its main purpose is to protect living and non-living, animate and inanimate nature values as well as our cultural heritage, especially the hive stones and the stone culture of Bükkalja in organizing related scientific activities, research, dissemination, education, environmentally conscious education and information supplying, lectures and courses on various scientific topics, and implementing leisure programs with cultural content.



The total number of members of the Kaptárkő Association now exceeds 100 and most of them help the work of the Association as a volunteer. As their main goal is to protect and present the stone culture of Bükkalja to a wider audience, the main theme of their community-building mini-projects supported and funded by the Carpathian Foundation was also organized around this.

In October 2018, the Association organized a themed weekend (entitled "The Stone CulTOUR of Bükkalja") in cooperation with the Hazajáró Association, which was supported by the Carpathian Foundation, among others. The locations were Eger, Cserépfalu and Cserépváralja.

The aim of the whole weekend tour was to acquaint the participants with the Bükkalja region and culture promoting the hiking in the Carpathian Basin.



The Stone CulTOUR weekend was followed by two more events, which were held in early spring 2019. During the first tour, participants were introduced to several attractions they could get acquainted, for example, by climbing to the St. Donat lookout in Tibolddaróc.

The second tour started from the Szépasszonyvölgy in Eger and led to Cakó-peak Hivestones and a pastor site and a stonebarn carved into tuff rocks in Király-rét were also visited. At the end of the tour, persistent hikers were greeted with goulash soup and cottage cheese pie. The tours and programs of the Association also support and develop community connections, meetings and cooperation. In addition to drawing the attention of the general public, young and old with its activities, programs and tours, the Kaptárkő Association specifically teaches the diversity of Bükkalja stone culture, the protection of landscape and natural values, and at the same time builds a community of people, groups of friends and families committed to these values.



## THE FORRÁS FOUNDATION FOR DISABLED YOUTHS

The Forrás Foundation for Disabled Youths was established in 2011 with János Bolyki's generous financial support, who is a local wine-maker. The aim of the organization is to create opportunities for disabled children and adults with special needs, by which their personality is developing as best it can to enable them to pursue their studies under the best possible conditions in accordance with their abilities, to provide them with cultural and entertainment opportunities suitable for them. They are convinced that disabled children are able to co-create value, contributing to society through their work, through they can gain an independent existence, if they are given the right support. Since its establishment, the foundation has been organizing weekly programs for its members with active participation of its members, leisure and club activities holding at the leisure centre of Eger. In addition to this, many excursions, events and special occasions are organized on the special days and holidays of the year, but their fundraising gala has been held for 5 years colourful performances await those interested in them. Thanks to the professional and financial support of the Carpathian Foundation, the enthusiastic small foundation team implemented several initiatives within the framework of the cooperation. One of their mini-projects was the Chance Lessons, during which "sensitisation and educational sessions" on the lives of the people with disabilities were organized for primary school students. The aim of the series of events is to form a so-called social attitude and promote the social integration of people with disabilities, improving the social skills of children and youngsters.

The lectures were attended by more than 120 students who could learn in an interactive way, what causes a person become disabled, what types of disabilities there are, and how people with different disabilities and their family members live their daily lives. These children could also learn and become aware of what difficulties (mobility, hearing and vision impairments) people with disabilities face in their daily lives, what aids they use, so they could try them out to understand how, for example, a trained helper dog can help them and how to support their lives. It was also presented how youngsters and adults without disabilities can help. It made "healthy" and "disabled" people come together by playing-solving tasks that required different tools (puzzle, logic games, arcade games). The children participating in the Chance Lessons were given a bookmark as a gift from the members of the Foundation made by young people with disabilities and special needs earlier in their craft classes.



In addition to this, the members of the foundation could participate in a self-advocacy training course conducted in the project, which provided participants more accurate and useful information on desirable greeting behaviour and internal and external qualities were discussed in order to develop self-knowledge and of course, there was also a talk on some human rights issues, especially the rights of people with disabilities, a knowledge of which is essential for them in their daily lives.

# THE UGAR ASSOCIATION

The Ugar Association was registered in 2014, active young students attending the College of Eger, who got to know one another in March 2011, during the organization of the 4th Geographical Specialization Week. The event and lectures were attended by 600 people, and the night adventure tour also by 360 people and 20 helpers. At that time, the idea of setting up a youth organization was formed in their mind, with which they could contribute to the community development of Eger through volunteer work. Their objectives include the implementation of youth initiatives, youth exchanges, meetings and programs in Europe; the protection of the environment and nature; the cultivation of community-led agriculture; promoting workshops and scientific research for talented and disadvantaged youngsters in the above-mentioned topics.



In 2017 and 2018, several mini-projects and actions were implemented by the Association within the framework of our project entitled "Strengthening and activating small communities of Northeast Hungary", in cooperation with us. Their projects were mainly for youngsters and students of Eger and were implemented with their active participation and involvement.

On one occasion, the environment at the Sas dorm in Eger, was improved through community cooperation; the participants scythed, mowed the lawn and picked



up the trash themselves and then 'adopted a bench'. The bench was polished and repainted, tidied up and youngsters, in addition to having a good time in the joint action, while they acted in public interest by their useful works.

On other occasion, they planted trees together in the city and the team managed to enrich the Earth, the urban environment, with four saplings. The involved local young people, the volunteers of the association, were twice organized in practice-oriented trainings, presented through non-formal and informal learning methods what new knowledge can be acquired on sustainability and ecology awareness, outside of school.

In the time between the two projects on formal practices, a community space was created to bring college students together, and a computer desk was designed and constructed along with a dartboard. Everyone helped to create from design to assembly and they learned a lot about manual work in the process. These youngsters found the programs useful and interesting, which not only expanded their skills and knowledge, but also made new acquaintances and friends. As a result of this, they expressed their willingness to participate in similar programs in the near future and they themselves have become more proactive, more open and sensitive to their environment and community.





## LET'S DO IT TOGETHER FOR OURSELVES, FOR OUR HEALTH

The Eger Health and Environment Association was founded among the first Hungarian associations in 1989 by journalist István Pécsi in cooperation with similarly committed citizens of Eger.

The backbone of their programs is the public lectures given by professionals on healthy lifestyles, health preservation and environmental protection, and environmentally conscious education. Since the establishment of the association, it has been organizing public awareness lectures in Eger about every two weeks. A prestigious speaker is invited each time to give a public presentation on a relevant topic required by the members. The event can also be attended by external stakeholders, the participation rate is usually about 40-60 people.

The members of the association also regularly join community programs initiated by local non-governmental organizations, for example, they took part in the preservation of the ruins of the Almár monastery, they regularly take part in the implementation of Eger Earth Day, Eger Civil Festival and Mobility Week. There is a Yoga Club within the association and a Health Day event called "Yoga for Health" is organized annually.

The association works primarily to raise awareness of the importance of protecting our health and the environment, and using our body's self-healing ability. Their goal is to strengthen the community attitude and to develop health-conscious, environmentally conscious behavior through community events, clubs, leisure programs, sports opportunities. They would like to get

the population to recognize that the key to a healthy lifestyle and paying attention to our environment is our mental and physical condition. If we do all this as a member of a community, we can be more effective on this path. Therefore, they strive to organize awareness-raising lectures that mobilize the population as much as possible, as well as work with other organizations to strengthen this impact. To this end, they joined the Food Rescue Group coordinated by the Opal Foundation in



2019, which saves the food to be discarded and thrown out in Heves County and distributes it to those in need. Within the framework of the present project of the Carpathian Foundation, several major community-building events were organized, their 30th anniversary event, their Health Day were both supported. In 2019 and 2020, several educational programs were organized on the occasion of World Water Day in disadvantaged small settlements in Heves County to introduce local children to the vital importance of water in an interactive way and to raise awareness of a healthy lifestyle in a playful way.

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## COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS IN BERVA VALLEY

The Berva Valley Association, founded in 2016 on the initiative of local residents, operates in one of the suburbs of Eger, in the Berva Valley housing estate, which previously housed the local fine assembly factory. Once upon a time, during the operation of the factory, there was a busy community life in the housing estate, this was reduced by the closure of the factory, and the local residents became somewhat isolated from each other due to the lack of community events and community space. Their old dream came thus true when they were able to open their local community house in the housing estate in 2018. The building was bought and renovated by the Eger municipality, the community space was operated by the association. The building used to be the club room of the fine assembly factory and later it served as local canteen and pub.

Many people took part in the renovation of the community house, it can be mentioned as an example of social cooperation, because some of the tools and equipment were offered by the residents, and the members of the association decorated and made it feel like home. Cultural and leisure programs were planned and organized for all age groups, as the main goal of the association was to form as many smaller clubs in the community space as possible, offering a variety of programs to the residents and many interesting meeting opportunities for the locals.

Their cooperation with the Carpathian Foundation within the framework of this project began in 2018 and they organized various cultural and leisure programs for local children and adults. With the support of the project, they implemented their Santa Claus celebration, their yearly birthday party and the exhibitions of paintings, drawings and ceramics prepared by the locals.

The members of the community were very happy with the successful cooperation, because they learned a lot about the planning, organization and implementation of the events, and they could get acquainted with other similar communities and non-governmental organizations, with whom they implemented new collaborations and projects.

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# FIVE DECADES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The Association of the Blind and Visually of Heves County to improve the living conditions and opportunities for the visually impaired. Their main goal is the rehabilitation, education and social integration of the visually impaired living in Hungary. They support guide dog trainings and work towards the development, striving to improve barrier-free transport and enabling all visually impaired to handle their administration independently without outside help. They also teach Braille and how to use special tools to make their daily lives much easier.



They also try to contribute to the experience by organizing joint programs and excursions, while spontaneously increase the cohesion in the Association. Within the framework of the cooperation with the Carpathian Foundation, we had the opportunity to support many of their projects, the first of which a talent content that they held. At the event, visually impaired people got the chance when they were able to show off their talent for the guests and stood on the stage with folk songs, poetry, and prose, and soldier songs. The event not only helped to strengthen, the local visually impaired community, but the opportunity to act also helped the members' self-confidence, served as an important issue to present to members of the majority society, that our visually impaired fellow human beings are also blessed with a diverse talent.



Particular attention is paid to visually impaired children and youngsters to learn and experience that even a visually impaired person is able to live a full and happy life. Their second project was Celebration of International White Cane Day. This day event aims to raise awareness of the specific situation of the blind and partially sighted, looking for ways to solve their problems and their own ways to their fuller integration into society. On that special occasion, the participants had an opportunity to learn more about the most significant events of the last 100 years, with stories about the White Cane.

As a closure of the project, they organized a Christmas feast, during which Father Gellért shared some of his thoughts about love, followed by a festive show by the Orchidea cultural group. At the end of the program, the gifts were handed over to all the participants. The event had a very positive impact on all people's lives, some of whom were elderly visually impaired people living alone. The abovementioned event alleviated their loneliness a bit, because by their appearance, they could feel like an important member of the community. This action was implemented within the framework of the Carpathian Foundation's project



# The results of our project entitled “Strengthening and activating small communities of North-East Hungary”



**IT WAS IMPLEMENTED  
FROM HUF 25 MILLION**



**THERE WERE 8546  
ENCOUNTERS IN THE  
PROJECT**



**IT TOOK 42 MONTHS**



**IN 3 COUNTIES OF  
NORTHERN HUNGARY**



**IN 27 SETTLEMENTS**



**WE WORKED WITH 49  
COMMUNITIES**



**32 WORKSHOPS, MEETINGS  
AND TRAININGS TOOK  
PLACE**



**WE ORGANIZED 6  
CONFERENCES**



**WE WERE FEATURED IN THE  
MEDIA 14 TIMES**



**WE WENT ON A  
PROFESSIONAL STUDY TRIP  
ABROAD 1 TIME**



**153 LOCAL MINI-PROJECTS  
WERE IMPLEMENTED BY  
LOCAL COMMUNITIES**



**147 MENTORING AND  
COUNSELING TOOK  
PLACE**

# PRESENTATION OF THE CARPATHIAN FOUNDATION

The mission of the Carpathian Foundation, established in 1995 within an international framework and registered as an independent organization in Hungary in 2002, is to improve the quality of life of people living in the Carpathian region, preserve the region's social, ethnic, cultural and natural values and support sustainable development, especially in regions near the border.

The Foundation deals with donations through tenders and the implementation of development programs and projects aimed at supporting disadvantaged rural areas and communities, as well as with scholarship granting. Since our inception, we have donated nearly \$ 16 million to hundreds of municipalities and nonprofit NGOs.



The main strategic goal of the Foundation is to develop the human resources of the region (individuals, organizations, communities) for the development of lagging rural areas, disadvantaged communities and minorities, thus indirectly reducing poverty and social exclusion. The main goal of our current programs is to support the initiatives of NGOs and local communities in disadvantaged rural regions, to support vulnerable groups and disadvantaged youth, and to raise social awareness.

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SZÉCHENYI 2020

Európai Unió  
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BEFKTETÉS A JÖVŐBE

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# THANK YOU!