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Master's Thesis of International Cooperation

Hungary's Foreign Policy, “Eastern Opening”:

- Case Study on Sino-Hungarian Relationship During the Second Era of Orbán's Government 2010-2022 -

헝가리의 외교 정책, "동방 개방":

- 제2차 Orbán 정부 2010-2022년 중-헝가리 관계 사례 연구 -

February 2023

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**Hungary's Foreign Policy, "Eastern
Opening":
- Case Study on Sino-Hungarian Relationship During
the Second Era of Orbán's Government -**

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Abstract

In order to have a glimpse of the development of the Hungarian foreign policy and the huge surprises of it, in the last couple of years, ones need to look back to the 1990s.

In 1990 the Soviet Union collapsed. After this event and the political transition in Hungary changed the view on foreign policy in the country.

The new democratic Hungarian government aimed to have a radical break from the Soviet/Communist influence which was present in the country for 47 years. The new foreign policy was based on three main goals.

These are the following as of the North-Atlantic and European orientation, the regional policy and supporting ethnic Hungarians in neighboring states.

Even though governments with different political views come and go during the following years of the transition, these three thrusts had never changed for decades.

Even the first Orbán government (1998-2002) continued to take part in the continuity of the same foreign policy patterns and Orbán himself was a huge critic towards China and the its communist values during the 1990s-2000s.

The fact also worth to mention, that the Asia-Pacific region has been important in Hungary's foreign policy since the early 2000s, but until the economic crisis in 2008 and the rising Euroscepticism within the eastern part of Europe, close ties with Eastern states wasn't a persistent and important topic in Hungary's foreign policy whatsoever.

The Hungarian government officially announced its new path of foreign policy, “Eastern Opening” in 2012.

Unlike the past governments who had a rather uncertain way of foreign policy, the new Orbán administration started to build a confrontational attitude towards the European Union (as mentioned before with the emerging Euroscepticism) and started to strengthen the relationship with the east hemisphere. Focusing on countries such as Russia, China and Turkey. The government stated that the reason behind the new choice of foreign policy trust is to react to the changes in the world’s economy and politics and to be more independent from the European Union.

The policy of the “Eastern opening” was introduced and built on three major observations.

First of all, the economy is continuously changing which makes it necessary to have good relationships with dynamically developing countries and regions such as the emerging east.

Also in the early 2000s, there was a lack of focus on markets from these countries as Hungary’s main priority was the EU and NATO membership.

Secondly, the government realized the opportunity to take advantage of the geographical position of Hungary as it has a great position to access both to the Asian and Post-Soviet states. This geographical position of the country has the opportunity to raise the country as a logistical and transportation hub for China in Europe.

Lastly, another motive behind the country’s emerging Eastern-oriented foreign policy was the assumption that a proper representation of the Hungarian state interests on the world stage is only possible once the country is more visible and able to build on the possible support of relevant worldwide and regional players.

One also need to realize that behind the policy there are more than just a mere

economic or political aim to position Hungary better in the changing world order. With the vacuum created within the European Union after the stormy years of the late 2000, early 2010, the Hungarian government is started to build its own illiberal state, based on countries such as China, Russia or Turkey.

As the newly found close partners and models for illiberal state within the policy are authoritarian countries, the government received mixed feedback from the public and the international scene.

Since the beginning of the Eastern Opening policy of Hungary under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and former 16+1 (former 17+1 until the leave of Lithuania) Initiative under Chinese President Xi Jinping, the economic and political ties between the two country have grown strong.

Hungary joined the 16+1 Initiative and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and China has become an important factor in Hungary-EU relations too. Western countries claim that Hungary was or is becoming a Chinese "puppet" or "Trojan horse" that could damage the EU's unity.

International affairs do not usually stir the domestic public matter in Hungary but the government's tight relationship with China raised some questions. The current war in Ukraine also raised questions regarding the government's close relationship to such autocratic states.

In my thesis I am searching for the answer for the questions whether the "Eastern Opening" foreign policy of the country can be a possible risk for Hungary's position within the European Union and in the transatlantic allies and also for their security. Or the policy is simply a balanced foreign policy to navigate in the new waters of world economy and world order as mainstream politicians from the governing party claims?

I am also trying to answer the question whether the perceived economic gain Hungary get from the “Eastern Opening” is worth the risk and criticism the country gets or not.

Keywords: Hungary, China, Foreign Policy, Eastern Opening, Security

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.2. Purpose of Research

Since the second era of Orbán's government, the new foreign policy direction is the "Eastern Opening" in Hungary. The policy declared that it is aimed to get more independence from the European Union while build strong relations with eastern powerful economies. These countries are mostly autocratic states such as China and Russia. Because of the nature of these new partners, many concern about the country's dependence and their influence on Hungary emerged.

During the preliminary research about Hungary's foreign policy "Eastern Opening", there are some holes detected in the already existent literature. Even Though the articles and studies about the new Hungarian foreign policy stated the fact that it is likely that the strong ties with autocratic states, such as with Russia, Turkey and China might contain high risk not only to Hungary's national security but to the whole European and Transatlantic security as well, there were no clear answers or in-depth analysis on it.

Questions of the thesis:

- the "Eastern Opening" is a risk for Hungary's position in the European

Union and in the transatlantic allies and also for their security, or simply a balanced foreign policy to navigate in the new challenges and multipolar world order as the foreign policy and many Hungarian politicians claim?

- the expected economic gain from the policy is worth the risk for the country or not?

Based on the research questions, two hypotheses were created

- The strengthened Sino-Hungarian relations stand as a risk for European and Transatlantic security
- “Eastern Opening” weakened the country’s national security

1.3. Methodology

As of the research method of the thesis. case study analysis was chosen.

Case study of the Sino-Hungarian relations as a method were used to examine Hungary’s “Eastern Opening” foreign policy through the country’s relationship with China during the last 12 years, since 2010, touching some of other related issues with Hungary’s foreign policy, the „Eastern Opening” two other key elements, Russia and Turkey.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used as well.

During the thesis among others multimedia and text analysis by analyze academic articles and books about the topic of Hungary's foreign policy and relationship with eastern states and China both from before and during the second era of Orbán's government in Hungary which are relevant to the thesis was used.

This paper is explaining the relationship between Hungary and China and the history of Hungary's foreign policy briefly since the political transition in 1989-1990 to the election of the second Orbán government in 2010. Then explain the policy of the "Eastern Opening" and the policy's implication towards China.

The thesis is also examining the "Eastern Opening" policy's effect on the country's security, the European Union's security and Transatlantic security as well.

The foreign policy has been conducted since the start of the second era of Orbán's government which should have allowed the government to fulfill the goals of the said foreign policy as the governing party as 2/3 in the parliament ever since the election in 2010 and has all the tools to be successful.

1.3. Literature Review

As of the preliminary findings for the thesis, there are several literatures focusing on Hungary's relationship with China in regard to Hungary's geopolitical characteristic

and the fact that Hungary plays an advocate for China within the EU and NATO as well.

Hungary, to repay China's financing, stood up as a political advocate for China in the EU. For example, in 2019, Hungary refused to sign a joint letter written by the European Commission concerning about the Chinese Government's reported torture of lawyers. Hungary was especially vocal in criticizing the Commission for its leveling of sanctions against Chinese officials overseeing the Uyghur concentration camps. Also prevented the EU from officially standing up against China's coercive domination of Hong Kong.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Hungary also was the first EU state to approve and distribute China's Sinopharm vaccine despite the fact that the government paid twice the price for Sinopharm compared to Pfizer or Moderna.

Experts said that Orban's decision to align Hungary with such states as China has rendered Hungary a dangerous Euro-Atlantic security liability.

Also, the fact that Hungary encouraged and welcomed Chinese political, commercial and intelligence entities into the heart of Europe, let China broaden and deepen their political-economic influence throughout the CEE region. The country now poses significant risk to the region, as well as to the EU's and NATO's functioning and integrity. Lately the prospect of Chinese spies in Hungary emerged as the Hungarian Government contracted the China State Construction Engineering Corporation to build Fudan University Campus in Hungary.

Not only the alleged University ties with the Chinese Intelligence Agency caused controversy. The China State Construction Engineering Corporation sanctioned by the US for ties with China's military industry, also the school will be built with Chinese materials and labor financed through Chinese loan to Hungary, which would

cost more than what the state spent on operating its entire higher education system in 2019.

Chapter 2. Hungary's Foreign Policy

*“Kompország, Kompország, Kompország: legképességebb álmaiban is csak mászkált két part között: Kelettől Nyugatig, de szívesebben vissza.”*¹

- Endre Ady: Re-reading Fyre

Historical Background

Hungary has always been a ferryboat country between the East and West as the famous Hungarian poet, Endre Ady said in the beginning of the 20th century.

For the country it was always a struggle to belong to any of the sides ever since.²

Not only in political but cultural way as well.

This notion can be used not only in Hungary's case but throughout the Central European and Southern European area as well. Belonging either to the West or East is a difficult task and not many countries were able to achieve so far in the region.³

As for Hungary's foreign policy evolution, this paper is going to outline it since the

¹ Ady Endre: Ismeretlen Korvin-kódex margójára. 1905

Translation: “Ferry-country, Ferry-country, Ferry-country: even in her most capable dreams, she only wandered between two parts: from East to West, but she preferred to return

² Rapcsák, János. “Hungarian Foreign Policy — with Some Historical Hindsight.” *Perspectives*, no. 3 (1994): 71–78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615756>.

³ JESZENSZKY, GÉZA. “HUNGARY’S FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMAS AFTER REGAINING SOVEREIGNTY.” *Society and Economy* 29, no. 1.pp 43–64. 2007 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41472070>.

post-war – II World War – era, but to get the full picture of the foreign policy of Hungary, it is also important to mention Hungary's long-term position before the war in a short sentence.

Hungary has a history of 400 years of domination by big empires such as the Ottomans and the Habsburg dynasty before the two World Wars. The years of suppression clearly affect the country in many ways. Hungary's foreign policy – and all of other matters of the country – was never during those years of suppression decided by the Hungarians but was exposed to the powers who were ruling over the country. Even during the World Wars the country was under many influences. It seems that every time it needed to support one side of the powers, Hungary have always been choosing unluckily. It did not change with the World Wars either.

After the war, Hungary became under the influence of the Soviet Union which determined its foreign policy for the upcoming decades. The Hungarian Government has total political loyalty towards the Soviet Union. A shift can be seen around the 1970s. The country started to adopt a more westernized pattern of foreign policy which was the first one after the war in an attempt to have its own foreign policy dispatched from the Soviet Union's.

The first sign of this newly found intention was the reluctance of the approval of the Soviet Union's invasion in Afghanistan. ⁴

Another important moment for the country's foreign policy was the join of the IMF and World Bank in 1982 which caused a big wave of disapproval by the Soviet Union

⁴ Rapcsák, János. "Hungarian Foreign Policy — with Some Historical Hindsight." *Perspectives*, no. 3 (1994): 71–78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615756>.

itself and from other countries from the Soviet bloc.⁵ By around the 1980s, as a result of the attempts to have its own foreign policy, Hungary started to have a more liberal foreign policy than ever before since the war.

By the 1980s, the term national interests appeared, but it mostly meant the security of the political regime, not any national security of economics etc. During this period the notion of the “role of the small states” appeared as well, which drifted Hungary away from the other Soviet bloc countries.

Around the same time, the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party started to create close relations with other socialist parties across western Europe. All these events were able to happen with the change in the Soviet Union’s leadership. During the end of the 1980s Hungary established new diplomatic relations with several countries such as South Korea, Israel etc. Being the first country from the Soviet bloc to do so.⁶

In 1988 a new government came into power, participated by politicians, so called reform-communist who created an independent foreign policy.

The government formulated in 1988 was the first one who asked for membership for the Council of Europe and negotiated the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary with initiating the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.⁷

⁵ JESZENSZKY, GÉZA. “HUNGARY’S FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMAS AFTER REGAINING SOVEREIGNTY.” *Society and Economy* 29, no. 1 (2007): 43–64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41472070>.

⁶ Rapcsák, János. “Hungarian Foreign Policy — with Some Historical Hindsight.” *Perspectives*, no. 3 (1994): 71–78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615756>.

⁷ Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. Republikon Intézet.

Foreign Policy since the political transition in 1989/1990 until the second Orbán era

During the transition in 1989 and 1990 and after the Soviet Union collapsed and Hungary got out from the Soviet influence, an election was held and the new government replaced the previous one during the Spring of 1990. With the new government new directions of foreign policy came into view.

Even though the new government aligned in new ways, they somewhat continued the legacy of the independent foreign policy created by the previous government.⁸

The year of 1989 was even described as the “year of the miracles”.

The new democratic Hungarian government aimed to have a radical break from the Soviet influence which was present in the country for 47 years. The new foreign policy was based on three main goals. These are the following as of the North-Atlantic and European orientation, the regional policy and supporting ethnic Hungarians in neighboring states.⁹

The new independent Hungary was a role model for the newly freed Central and Eastern European Countries based on many factors. Hungary was a driving force in the region, with leading many of the changes. As mentioned before the country was the first one to initiate diplomatic relations with South Korea, South Africa, Chile or

8 Rapcsák, János. “Hungarian Foreign Policy — with Some Historical Hindsight.” *Perspectives*, no. 3 (1994): 71–78.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615756>.

9 Dr. Varga, Imre. *Development of the Hungarian Foreign Policy in the Last Ten Years: A comparison of the foreign policy programs of the post-transition Hungarian governments.* *National Security and the Future* 2 (1), 2000.

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/14391645.pdf>

Israel among others from former Soviet-bloc. The country also joined the United Nations' Geneva Refugee Convention and the Alps-Adriatic Working Group. As also mentioned in the previous section the country initiated the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 and had a leading role in the creation of the Visegrád Group (V4) in the region.¹⁰

Another milestone was the fact that Hungary was the first former Soviet-bloc country to apply to the European Union in 1994. Hungary in fact was a model country after the transition but the newfound success was not long. Nationalism raised in the region with the heated situation surrounded the country.

The rising nationalism reached the country, causing internal and external problems as well. The economy of the country also faced many challenges. In 1995 Hungary got dangerously close to state bankruptcy. After the transition the country had to face with many problems such as the high percentage of job loss, the increasing crime rate and emerging corruption with the shady deals of privatization throwed back the country from being a role model to an average country. But even though the country faced some difficulties, its path towards the West did not stop.

In 1997 Hungary was invited to the NATO and in 1998 was part of the 'Luxemburg Six' as of being a centered candidate to join the European Union – Even though Hungary was part of the "Luxemburg Six" later on only joined the European Union with 10 other candidates in 2004 –. After the first couple of year's success, the country faced a huge downhill. It is clear that during the years after the transition, the country completely focused on the integration into the European Union.

¹⁰ JESZENSZKY, GÉZA. "HUNGARY'S FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMAS AFTER REGAINING SOVEREIGNTY." *Society and Economy* 29, no. 1 (2007): 43–64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41472070>.

In 2006 severe domestic instability and in 2008 the global economic crisis shook the country.

It is clear that after the transition, Hungary's spirit of foreign policy was filled with idealistic approach. During this period values were the most important factor of foreign policy. In the 1990s China and Russia were neglected based on these values and idealistic ideas up until the early 2000s.¹¹

After 2002 China and even Russia became strategically important and the country opened towards them more, turning the foreign policy into a less idealistic, more realistic way, realizing the importance of these economies.

Around this time when Hungary started to open again for the East ever since the transition in the 1990s but still not as much as it is today.

As this paper is researching on "Eastern Opening" on Hungary's, Europe's and the transatlantic security, before moving on to the "Eastern Opening" policy, a brief introduction of the relations between the country and the EU and the US will be mentioned.

11 Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. Republikon Intézet.

The EU

Discussing the possibility of Hungary as a security challenger in the European Union, one needs to see the context of where the security and risk of the European Union lies.

As of the EU, Euroscepticism needs to be highlighted along with populism firstly. Euroscepticism is not a newfound concept within the European Union but became one of the burning questions ever since around 2008.¹²

In the past, the European Union was known for its proud members and many European countries wanted to join the EU. The wide range of extension of the European Union showed the success of it.

However, with the global economic crisis, Arab Spring and BREXIT, the belief in the European Union started to decrease.

The economic crisis effected many EU member states, some of those even was getting close to state bankruptcy during the years after the crisis, such as Greece or Hungary.

The Arab Spring brought the refugee crisis and the emerge of the Islamic State with many attacks on Europe to this already tensed environment.¹³

¹² Visnovitz, Péter. Erin, Jenne. Populist argumentation in foreign policy: the case of Hungary under Viktor Orbán, 2010-2020. *Comparative European Politics*, 2019, pg. 683-702.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41295-021-00256-3>

¹³ Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. *Republikon Intézet*.

To solve the refugee crisis between 2015-16, the EU created the Asylum System, but the reaction to it were diverse by the members states. Many of the states opposed the idea of letting the refugees into their countries or even into the European Union, many reasoned for example with that the Islamic State can get into the EU disguised as refugees and the cultural differences are too wide for the refugees to get integrated into the societies of Europe. One of the main critics of the System was Hungary.

After the refugee crisis another big event happened. The United Kingdom left the EU with the referendum of the BREXIT which were conducted in 2016. The BREXIT ended the successful expansion strike of the European Union and raised many concerns within the member states. All of these events put the EU into an internal crisis of its own and helped Euroscepticism to achieve more success while the citizens of the European Union felt that the power of provided security by the EU has been betrayed. Many member states spoke up and lost their belief in liberal democracy. In this vacuum which created within the European Union, many trend was able to emerge. Populism, anti-elitism and anti-globalism all started to root into the consciousness of the member states.¹⁴ Hungary stands out of these member states. The country declared a war of independence against Brussels and promote the Europe of Nation instead of the European Union. While the government doing its war against the EU, the Hungarian people thinks otherwise and they believe they belong to the western societies.

¹⁴ Visnovitz, Péter. Erin, Jenne. Populist argumentation in foreign policy: the case of Hungary under Viktor Orbán, 2010-2020. *Comparative European Politics*, 2019, pg. 683-702.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41295-021-00256-3>

The US

The US has been always an important partner in the view of Hungary, but for the United States the region and Hungary became important as well with the emerging Chinese involvement.

Hungary's relationship with the United States has been rather positive since the political transition in the early 1990s. Hungary is the member of NATO which biggest contributor is The United States, therefore the good relations with the United States has great importance in Hungary's foreign policy in general as the country does not have great military power on its own.

Before the election in 2010, while he was in opposition between 2002 and 2010, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was viewed by the US as someone who defends the western values and criticizes the uncertain foreign policy of the previous cabinets.

But after 2010, with the second era of Orbán as the Prime Minister of Hungary, that attitude of Orbán regarding to foreign policy changed.

He did not get back to the foreign policy he was promoted before for so long, but he further drifted the direction of foreign policy away to the east, weakening the Transatlantic commitments as well, with Hungary became an unpredictable ally for the US and started to weaken the Atlantic commitments.¹⁵

After the Trump administration came into power, it seemed the relations between the

¹⁵ Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. Republika Intézet.

two countries would rather turn more friendly than before.

However, during the Trump administration, the US recognized China as its no.1 challenger in the world economy and power to become in the hegemon position. At the same time the more friendly Russian-Hungarian relations also accelerated the cooling down between the two countries. Did not help Hungary's rejection of Trump's 5G Clean Network with following accepting the Huawei's 5G plan. The Construction of the Fudan University campus – detailed later on – also a weakening point between the countries as the constructor of the campus is a company banned by the United States because of its ties with the military sector in China.¹⁶

2.3 “Eastern Opening” as the new strategy

„Nyugati zászló alatt hajózunk, de keleti szél fúj a világgazdaságban”¹⁷
- Viktor Orbán, 2010

Background of the “Eastern Opening”

To grasp the idea of the Orbán government's new foreign policy one needs to go back to the economic financial crisis in 2008. After Orbán won the election the

¹⁶ Kraemer, Richard and Janda, Jakub. Orbán's Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

¹⁷ Magyar, Péter. 2010. Orbán: Keleti szél fúj. Index

https://index.hu/belfold/2010/11/05/orban_keleti_szel_fuj/

Translation: We are sailing under Western flag but there is Eastern wind blowing in world economy

second time back in 2010, he started a new direction of foreign policy.

The strategy of the “Eastern Opening” is more of a state ideology rather than a mere foreign policy and trade strategy, although these two are important parts of it. (Szent-Iványi) Even though it’s depth, the “Eastern Opening” is usually portrait as a simple tool of diversification of the country’s geopolitical abilities and economic opportunities.

The strategy has three pillars formulated by Szent-Iványi as of the following as ideological pillar, foreign policy pillar and the foreign trade pillar.¹⁸

As for the third pillar, the foreign trade one is not successful and some scholar’s opinion is that it is not important part of the strategy but as this paper will explain it in the next chapter, the government is justifying many of their choices within the policy with the reasoning of any economic benefit for the country.

The ideological foundation of the policy is coming from Russia, particularly the Russian politician Vladimir Surkov and the Russian political analyst Alexander Dugin. Based on their theory, the West is decadent and the liberal democracy of their choice is outdated and not able to answer anymore to the new challenges the world faces. They stated that the only solution is the illiberal state which protects traditional values.

For the foreign policy pillar, the strategy emphasizes the importance of strengthening relations with like-minded illiberal states and to strengthen the economic and political dependence on said states while weaken the relations with Western systems

¹⁸ Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. Republikon Intézet.

and institutions such as the European Union and the NATO.

During the thesis, the paper is going to use this understanding of the system of the “Eastern Opening” strategy of Hungary

The foreign policy of the “Eastern Opening” is attacking the Western patterns and try to be in conflict with those while complimenting the Eastern ones and offer partnership to said states. Doing this under the façade of being an independent, sovereign state.¹⁹

The “Eastern Opening” is a sharp contrast compared to the Hungarian natural values and national interests. Pushing the country to face with serious risks and going through a dangerous adventure. (et. Szent-Iványi 2020)

Even though as explained previously, the Eastern Opening is a complex policy which has many aspects as of economic, political and ideological, for the broad mass, the government introduce it as merely a tool, a reaction after the global economic crisis in 2008 to the country to recover from the recession and strengthen its economy.

Russia

When the topic of the “Eastern Opening” policy came up, it is not rare that one would think about the Russian-Hungarian partnership. Although the policy is having other key actors – such as China as of the thesis’ focus point – it is not wrong

19 Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. Republikon Intézet.

to assume that Russia is the corner point of the Hungarian foreign policy. Russia always has been a traditionally important economic partner of Hungary. But after the new strategy of foreign policy of the Eastern Opening a new reproachment can be detected towards the country. The new strategy still focuses on trade on the surface but politics became an equally important element between Russia and Hungary.

Hungary became the home of many Russian assets, for example the International Investment Bank which Hungary became a member of in 2014. The Bank moved its main office from Moscow to Budapest during 2019.²⁰

The country's dependence on Russia has been always significant on the energy sector with gas and oil as well.

Hungary's dependence on Russia is somewhat overanalyzed and overestimated as there are alternative solutions to get the country's gas and/or oil needs through other ways not including Russia.

However, in the last decade or so Hungary's dependence not only did not decrease but increased significantly.

With the project of Paks 2 nuclear plant, Hungary tied itself to Russia for the upcoming decades. The project is a great deal for Rosatom, the national energy company of Russia. As one of the biggest projects in energy sector as of now in Hungary, the deal with Russia got lots of media and academic spotlight in recent years. There are arguments about the environmental effects of the deal, about the economic and security. As of the economic effects, Paks 2 supposed to be the second bloc of the national nuclear power plant of Hungary. The original first bloc provides

²⁰ Kraemer, Richard and Janda, Jakub. Orban's Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

huge chunk from the country's energy needs as of approximately its 50%. Many scholars and politicians argue thought the fact, that renewable energy sources and green energy would be the perfect way to invest in, not a new nuclear power plant, which is not even necessarily important for the country's energy needs.

As of the economic backsides of the deal we can detect many. First of all, the constructor of the power plant is Rosatom, with loan Hungary supposed to get from Russia. This deal is tying the country to Russia more. Not to mention the fact that the contract between the government and Rosatom was never disclosed. This non-disclosure fact and the increasing dependence on Russia raise many questions on the partnership's effect on Hungary's security itself. As mentioned in the previous part about the Eastern Opening itself, Russia is one of the key partners within the strategy. Not even the Hungarian government get the core of the strategy from Russian thinkers, the country is an important factor in Hungary's economy as well, not to mention political ties. Hungary has been a loyal critic of sanctions against Russia in recent years. Not only after the annexation of Crimea back in 2014, Hungary is one of the loudest voices in the European Union when it comes to criticizing the current sanction against Russia and Russian citizens due to the current war in Ukraine. Furthermore, most likely to nurture the great relations between the two countries, the government officials and FIDESZ – governing party – closely politicians and new outlets refused to mention Putin's name when speaking about the war and the government refused to let weapons through the country to transport to Ukraine.

Turkey

The relations between Turkey and Hungary rooted back to the Middle Ages, of course the two countries were not in the same form as of now, but it is important to see the long history of the two nations. As mentioned before, Hungary was under the Ottoman Empire's suppression between 1526 and 1686 – before the Habsburg dynasty replaced the Ottoman's as the suppressor of the country –. Because of the long history between the two countries, there are many common aspects of Turkey's and Hungary's culture and even language. This notion inspired and encouraged many cooperation between the two. For example, in 1916, Istanbul was the first city to welcome the Hungarian Cultural Centre. Hungary also was one of the first to recognize the Republic of Turkey and initiate diplomatic relations. However, after the II. World War, Hungary became the part of the Eastern bloc while Turkey joined NATO in 1952 so the relations weakened during the upcoming years.²¹

Only after the political change, there was a shift and the relations started to improve again. Turkey got a special role only after 2010, when “Eastern Opening” was introduced.

The country was named one of the main strategic partners of Hungary. After the regime change in Hungary in 2010 one can see reproachment with Turkey as it was seen with Russia. The economic ties strengthened after the visit of Turkey's President,

21 Dr. Zoltán.Egeresi. Hungary-Turkey Relations. Blog NO:2022/21. Center For Eurasian Studies

Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Budapest. The visit in 2013 marked as the start of the High Level Strategic Economic Council between the two countries. The Council has regular summits.

The political cooperation started to accelerate after 15 July 2016, the attempted coup in Turkey.²² Hungary showed its solidarity with Turkey. Around that time, during the refugee crisis in Europe, when Turkey become an important partner for Hungary in security as well. Hungary stated that Turkey plays an important role not only the country's, but Europe's security as of its role in the crisis.

Hungary also one of the few countries which are fully support Turkey's ambition to be a full member of the European Union.

Another important act of the Hungarian-Turkish relations is the fact that Hungary became the observing member of the Turkic Council in order to improve its relations with the Turkic countries as of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This action was part of the "Eastern Opening" policy.

Similarly, to the its position with Russia, Hungary also opposed European Union actions against Turkey as well. For example, when the European Union wanted to publish a declaration on the military action in Northern Syria back in 2016.²³

Another sign of the great relationship of the two country is the recent minister visit in Turkey. After the 2022 election in Hungary, the Foreign Minister – Péter Szijjártó, surprising everyone – visited Ankara during his first official trip. During his visit, he

22 Dr. Zoltán.Egeresi. Hungary-Turkey Relations. Blog NO:2022/21. Center For Eurasian Studies

<https://avim.org.tr/Blog/HUNGARY-TURKEY-RELATIONS-24-05-2022>

23 Hamdi.Firat.Buyuk. Orban Enlists Turkic States in Fight Against Liberal Democracy. Reporting Democracy. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. 22 October 2019

<https://balkaninsight.com/2019/10/22/orban-enlists-turkic-states-in-fight-against-liberal-democracy/>

met with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglav. The reason of the trip is also indicated high level of political relations. The building of the Hungarian Embassy was opened. The new embassy is capable to give job for twice as many diplomats as it had before. The Hungarian foreign minister emphasized the global importance of Turkey in his speech during the ceremony.²⁴

24 Hungary External Relations Weekly Briefing: Hungarian and Turkish relations in the light of the Russian and Ukrainian war. Weekly Briefing, Vol. 50. No. 4 (HU) April 2022. China-CEE Institute

Chapter 3. Hungary's Foreign Policy Towards China

Hungary's foreign policy towards China under the “Eastern Opening”

Before this paper moves on to the current approach of Hungary towards China during the second era of Orbán's government, this paper would like to summarize briefly the historical background of the Sino-Hungarian relations.

China recognized Hungary in October 4 1949. As mentioned before, Hungary was under the influence of the Soviet Union around that time and recognition is based on the mutual communist parties. During the upcoming years Hungary and China nurtured a good relationship. Hungary supported China in many topics, for example its position on Tibet, the One China Policy etc.

The positive relations between the two countries changed during the political transition in 1990s. However, after Hungary's successful integration to the European Union and NATO, the government realized that relations with emerging powers are must. The Medgyessy government in 2003 visited Beijing, first-time high-profile meeting after the political transition in 1989/1990.

All the upcoming governments knew the economic importance of China but did not pursue any tight relations politically with the country. The tighter political relations came during the second era of Orbán after 2010.

The acceleration of the relationship can be detected after 2011. However, it is worth to mention the fact that even before he was elected, Orbán visited Beijing in 2009 to initiate a party-to-party relations with the CCP.

This step surprised many as the prime minister was famous for his opposition against China during his first term as a prime minister between 1998-2002, emphasized it with his visit to the Dalai Lama and the big anti-communist approach during his first term of being the Prime Minister of Hungary.²⁵

In the following this paper will explain the Sino-Hungarian relationship categorized by the three pillars of the policy of “Eastern Opening” by Szent-Iványi as of ideology, economic relations, (foreign trade) and foreign policy (political relations) with a review of some of the biggest projects and cooperation between the two countries.

Ideology

The ideological concept of the “Eastern Opening” comes from Russian scholars as mentioned before.

That ideological framework defines the illiberal state which has been a goal for the government of Hungary in recent years as the country found the Western societies

²⁵ Matura, Tamás. Hungary and China: Hopes and reality (In: Mapping Europe-China Relations A Bottom-Up Approach). A Report by the European Think-tank Network on China (ETNC), 2015
https://www.academia.edu/25224315/Hungary_and_China_Hopes_and_reality_In_Mapping_Europe_China_Relations_A_Bottom_Up_Approach_email_work_card=title

decadent and the liberal states to be outdated.²⁶

China was named as one of the members of the Holy Trinity of illiberal states and to be so, became a model country for Hungary to follow. The close relationship with China – illiberal states – was one of the goals of the policy, even with the price to pay for investments projects as of the Belgrade-Budapest Railway, Fudan University Campus etc.

Political Relations

As mentioned before with the new governing party, the CCP started a party-to-party relations in 2009, a year before the second election of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Hungary only then started a closer political relationship with China. In 2011, Hungary was the first country from the Central and Eastern European Area to host a meeting with China, which became the first step of the later called 16+1 framework. Ever since the relationship is one of the best from the CEE region with China. Many tried to figure out the reason. It could be because of the big Chinese diaspora in Hungary who came around 1980s to the country, when Chinese were able to travel without visa to the country or the so-called legend of Sino-Hungarian brotherhood which roots back to the ancient time and justified with cultural similarities.

²⁶ Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. Republikon Intézet.

Whichever is might be true, it is clear that the political relations have never been better between China and Hungary as of now. During the recent years, Hungary became the defender of China in many ways. It seems that the country is willing to pay back the financial benefits it gets from China through many channels. Hungary became the political advocate of China within the European Union in recent years with actions such as refusing to sign the joint statement of the European Union on the tortured lawyers or heavily criticizing the sanctions against China.

Economic Relations

As previously mentioned, the economic relations between China and Hungary have been always the main focus of the country. Even though as mentioned before, the relations between the two countries were not the same after the democratic transition in Hungary, the country still recognized the importance of China as economic partner outside of Europe, but the country's focus was more on the Western integration.

Until 2003 the even the mentioned economic relations were not that significant. During the Medgyessy government, the Prime Minister visited Beijing and created a more welcoming environment. After 2003, every cabinet kept in mind the importance of China but none of those turned the direction of the foreign policy to the East until the second era of Orbán's government since 2010.

Under the "Eastern Opening" policy as mentioned before, Hungary joined the Belt and Road Initiative and the 16+1 Regional Platform. The country tried to be a loyal

ally to China not only in economic sense but political one as well in order to hope some economic benefits for its loyalty.

The country expected a huge growth of the trade flow between the two countries, mostly in its import. As seen in the following figures, the expectation of the foreign policy did not meet with reality.

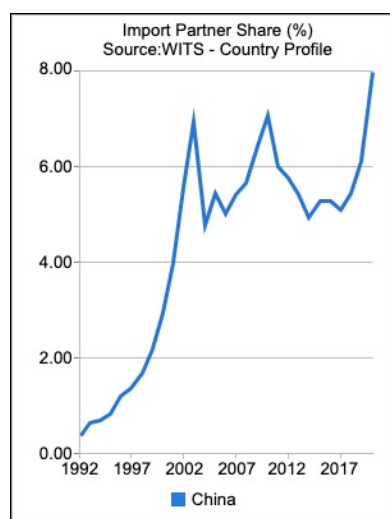


Figure 1.

First take a look on the import share of China ever since the political transition. As explained before, figure 1. clearly shows how China became more and more important after the year 2003 when bilateral ties started to become more prominent. While in 2003 the import share of China jumped to almost three times of the share in the previous year but ever since then, it is around the same percentage.

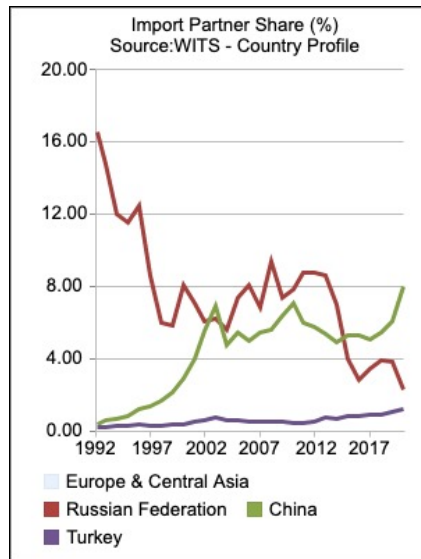


Figure 2.

However, if one does not only look of the attractive shape of the line but the scale of the graph, the picture is more nuanced as it is seen on the figure 2, where the import share of China will be compared with other countries or regions.

As seen on figure 2., none of the key countries from the “Eastern Opening” policy do well when it is come to the import share partners of Hungary, more so the import share of Russia declined rapidly after the announcement of the policy.

It is somewhat surprising as it was mentioned before, the relationship with Russia became close in recent years, and Hungary import most of its energy source from Russia, such as gas and oil. In the next figure the European and Middle East region is also included into the graph to see the scale of the import share on the full Hungarian import flow.

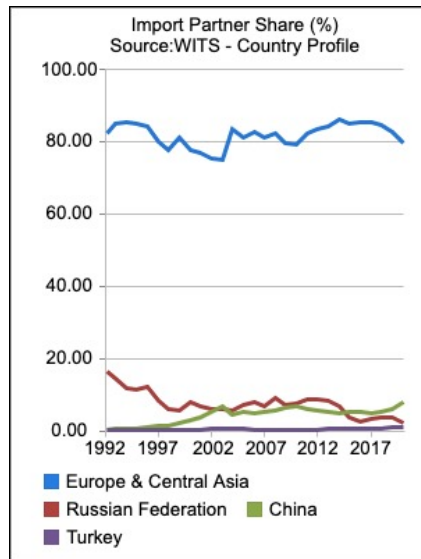


Figure 3.

On figure 3. it is evident that the even though China's share out of all the import partners are higher than the other two key partner's – considered by the “Eastern Opening” – combined, it is also clear that the main import partner of the country is still Europe. Hence the aim, also looking to the big picture, the China's share from Hungary's import is stagnate when it's come to the big picture, only improving as much as around 3.8 % since 2003.

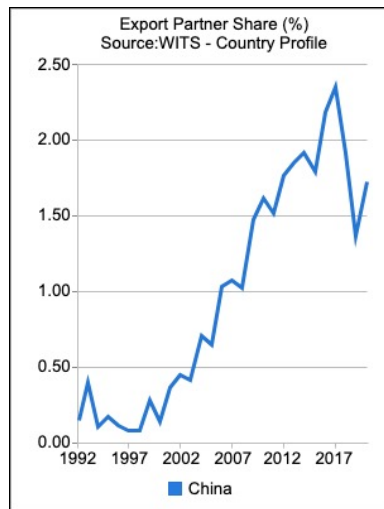


Figure 4.

“Eastern Opening” aimed to promote exports as well while takes advantage of the country’s geographical position between the West and the East. As seen in figure 4. the export share of China, similarly to the import share started to significantly increase after the year 2003. Also, similarly to the import share, it is look good in the scale as of figure 4, but on the bigger picture it is more nuanced.

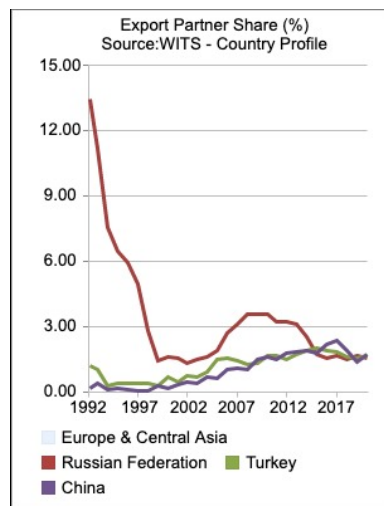


Figure 5.

On figure 5 there are the key partners within “Eastern Opening”. As of the import share, a decline in the export share of Russia is observable. The same trend can be seen here as the import share. The export share of China a bit increased after 2003 but stagnate ever since.

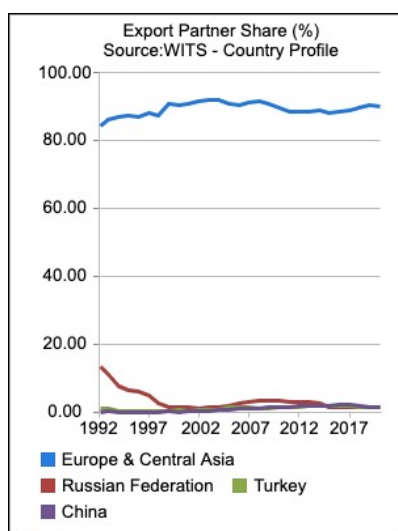
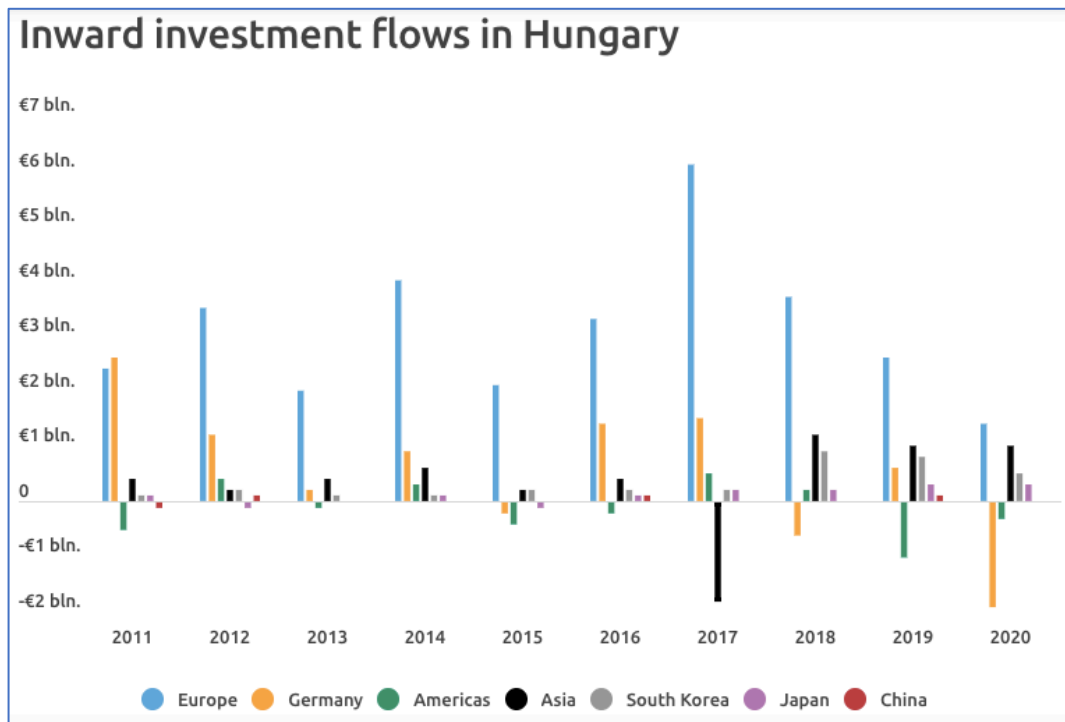


Figure 6.

As for the comparison with the traditional partners of Hungary, the European and Central Asia area is still dominating.

It is evident from the figures above that the one of the goals of the “Eastern Opening” as of being more independent against the traditional partners and to promote the trade with non-traditional partners has not occurred. The trade with China is also imbalanced as seen in the figures. The import share of China is much higher than the export.

Another important factor of the economic relations between the countries is investments. Traditionally, the country's biggest partner in investments is Germany.²⁷ As of China, many promised investments from China to Hungary never arrived.²⁸



Source:EURACITV

Figure 7.

Still, in the CEE region, the amount of investment to Hungary is somewhat significant as the country is the receipt of the highest amount of investment in the region.

²⁷ Xin, Chen. Foreign Direct Investment in Central and Eastern European Countries (2019). pp. 84. China-CEE Institute. Budapest. 2020

²⁸ Matura, Tamás. Report on Chinese Influence in Hungary. Center for European Policy Analysis. 2022

However as seen on figure 7. China has a small share from the inward investment flow into Hungary, even from Asia, China is only the fourth investor after South Korea, Japan and even India.²⁹ China's investments and trade deals are also mostly involving multinational companies instead of Hungarians. The Hungarian owned companies benefitted from Chinese investment is lower than 10%.

During the early 2010s there were only one big scale investment to Hungary. The Chinese Wanhua Industrial Groups bought 96% of the Borsod Chemicals Hungary which is the second largest chemical company in the country. It was a perfect example of the nature of the Chinese investments.³⁰

Some of the concerning deals between the two countries will be discussed later on.

Important Cooperation

In the following part this paper will list and explain some of the most important cooperation and frameworks between China and Hungary. The list is not complete, only listing the most influential ones. Later, the thesis will mention more cooperation which could be able to affect the security of both national and

²⁹ Lukács, Eszter. Völgyi, Katalin. Chinese Foreign Direct Investments in Hungary from the Perspective of BRI, International Capacity Cooperation, and Made in China 2025. Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 413-446. April 2021

³⁰ Kraemer, Richard and Janda, Jakub. Orban's Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

international.

16+1 Regional Platform

The 16+1 platform was created in 2012, as the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2008, and is the largest and most complex cooperation between China and the Central, Eastern and Southern European region. The platform nationalized in 2013 with the Warsaw pact.

The platform was created to be the bridge between Western and Eastern Europe, Russia and Asia – hence the member states of the platform, chosen by China –, which countries have overlapping interests in the region.³¹

Hungary was quick to join the 16+1 platform in the mindset of the “Eastern Opening” strategy in order to gain economic benefits.³² Ever since the country joined to the platform, several infrastructural development plans were announced but none of it materialized. As mentioned, Hungary seeks to gain economic benefits from the cooperation within the platform. As in the previous section already explained, the Sino-Hungarian relations benefits in economic aspect mostly came from multinational companies. Within the platform, Hungary hopes, that if China would take the step of moving its manufacture sector abroad, Hungary could be an

³¹ Rühlig, Tim Nicholas. Political values in EU-China relations: Towards a “principled” or a “pragmatic” approach? Political values in Europe-China relations. ETNC Report. The Swedish Institute of International Affairs(UI), Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, French Institute of International Relations (Ifri), Elcano Royal Institute. December 2018

³² Kraemer, Richard and Janda ,Jakub. Orban’s Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

appealing destination to do so.³³ One of the platform's main goals is to promote the Belt and Road Initiative, which this paper will explain in the following part.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Hungary was the first European Union member state to join the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013. The Belt and Road Initiative is the replacement of the New Silk Road plan to develop the cooperation between China and the Central and Eastern European Countries. It was the intention of China to not have a cooperation initiative with the European Union but individual states. The BRI is a purely China centered framework. The cooperation with the CEE region became more important to China after the countries in the region integrated to the European Union and can be a door to China to the European market. The selection of countries is as attentive as the 16+1 platform's selection. According to the President of China Xi Jinping stated in his speech during the Party Congress in 2017 that the BRI is aimed to build policy, infrastructure, trade, finance, people-to-people connectivity with creating a new platform for international cooperation. He also described the initiative as a win-win seeking cooperation which might benefit everyone involved.³⁴

³³ Matura, Tamás. Hungary and China: Hopes and reality (In: Mapping Europe-China Relations A Bottom-Up Approach). A Report by the European Think-tank Network on China (ETNC), 2015

³⁴ Chan, Louis. Analysis – Hungary: Leading the Way in BRI Co-operation. Hong Kong Trade Development Council. 2017
<https://research.hktdc.com/en/article/MzgyODc4NzEy>

He also announced a New Asian Security Strategy within BRI. This notion of the BRI would be the answer to the Washington dominated security hub (NATO) which is often criticized by Xi Jinping.³⁵

The main component of the Initiative is the Belgrade-Budapest Railway. The railways would connect China with the CEE region as it would connect to the already existing Port of Piraeus. The railway supposed to boost China's access to the European market. The deal of the Belgrade-Budapest Railways was signed by China, Hungary and Serbia in 2013.

The estimated worth of the project is 15 \$ Billion Dollars which 80% China would loan through the Export-Import Bank of China to Hungary.³⁶ The contract of the deal is not disclosed, following the same pattern as already seen with Russia and the Paks 2 project, but some expert says the interest rate of the loan given by China is high, which create a rather unfavorable deal for Hungary.

But it is clear that the project is important to Hungary because the country expect that the railways would put it into a good position to become a logistical hub in the CEE region.³⁷ Even though it is debatable whether the deal and the project is beneficial to Hungary, it is not a positive sign that the supposed completion of the project is already delayed and announced to be done by 2025 instead of the initiated

³⁵ Rühlig, Tim Nicholas. Political values in EU-China relations: Towards a "principled" or a "pragmatic" approach? Political values in Europe-China relations. ETNC Report. The Swedish Institute of International Affairs(UI), Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, French Institute of International Relations (Ifri), Elcano Royal Institute. December 2018

³⁶ Van der Putten, Frans-Paul. Seaman, John. Huotari, Mikko. Ekman, Alice. Otero-Iglesias, Miguel. Europe and China's New Silk Roads. Think-tank Network on China (ETNC). December 2016

³⁷ Gerstl, Alfred. "China's New Silk Roads. Categorising and Grouping the World: Beijing's 16+1+X European Formula." Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies 10, no. 1 (2013): 31–58.
doi:10.2478/VJEAS-2018-0002.

2017. The suspicious deal of the project is also on the agenda of the EU, there is an investigation by the EU Commission.³⁸

Vaccine Diplomacy

During the COVID-19 pandemic, China was positioned into the spotlight as of the country of origin of the pandemic. China was criticized because of their “mask diplomacy” or other actions but Hungary was a loyal ally to the PRC.

The country praised China for its contribution to tackle the pandemic with its donation and support while at the same time criticizing the European Union of its slow and not effective response to the pandemic. Hungary stated that the country did not receive the appropriate help from the EU, so the country was looking for help from China and the Turkic Council where they received the amount of help satisfactory to the government.

Hungary was also first from the European Union member states to approve and distribute China’s Sinopharm vaccine. While the vaccine got many criticisms and many were doubting the effectiveness of it – the country even made a deal with China about the vaccines while the European Medicines Agency had not approved it yet –, in Hungary, government officials and even Prime Minister Orbán promoted to accept

³⁸ Kraemer, Richard and Janda, Jakub. Orban’s Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

or even choose Sinopharm vaccine over the other vaccines.

The big media promotion was shadowed by the fact that the government bought the Sinopharm vaccine through a really dissatisfactory deal. Hungary got the vaccines twice the price as of Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech, trice the price as of the Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline and 18 times of the price of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines.³⁹

³⁹ Kraemer, Richard and Janda ,Jakub. Orban's Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

Chapter 4. Analysis

Residency Bond Program

The Residency Bond Program is an interesting notion regarding to Hungarian foreign policy. It is not considered strictly as the part of the “Eastern Opening” policy officially, but the aim of the program is clearly fit into it. As the thesis will explain in this passage, the program was one of the tools for the Hungarian government to attract investors to the country, but as the paper showed before, the investment flow of the country from outside of the EU have not increased in recent years, it can be assumed that even though the country expected investment flow into the country from the program it did not help.

As mentioned previously, Hungary is a huge critic of the Asylum system within the European Union and the government totally oppose the acceptance of migrants into Hungary and into Europe.

While the country is loudly against the EU policies on migrants, silently in 2012 passed a law which allow non-EU citizens to buy Residency Bond from Hungary. The law – which were fast pushed through the parliament where governing party FIDESZ has 2/3 in – grant access through the program a way into the Schengen zone

through Hungary in a good price.⁴⁰

The Bond allowed investors and their family members to come to the Schengen zone with a cashback of their investment after 5 years.⁴¹

The program has been halted since March 2017, but within the time period of 2013-2017 around 20.000 foreign citizens arrived to Hungary with an estimated number of around 81% of them from China and many from Russia, the Middle East or Africa. There were many controversies behind the program, one of it the possible security risk as it stated that the background check of the applicants is not satisfactory and basically anyone who had the money could entered the Schengen zone of Europe through Hungary. The Hungarian news outlet Direkt36 got some information on names who were receiving the visa through the bond, some of are accused of terrorist involvement by other governments. Reported by Reuters for example, Atiya Khoury were granted a visa although he was accused in 2016 of investing in fuel for President Bashar al-Assad's government.⁴²

Because of the rising criticism of the program, it was halt in 2017 but the law is still in power and the government can reopen the program anytime.⁴³

⁴⁰ Dunai, Marton. Want to be Hungarian? Buy some bonds. Reuters. 2012
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-bonds-citizenship-idUKBRE89T0OE20121030>

⁴¹ RCP. Hungarian Residency Bond Program
<https://www.residencybond.eu/residencybondprogram.html#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Hungarian%20Residency,least%20EUR%20360%2C000%20to%20invest.>

⁴² Reuters Staff. Hungary gave visa to Syrian man under U.S. sanctions for assisting Assad. Reuters. 2018
<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-hungary-election-residency-syria-idUKKBN1H42SF>

⁴³ Zoldi, Blanka. From China to Hungary, in Hope and Fear. OCCRP. 2018
<https://www.occrp.org/en/goldforvisas/from-china-to-hungary-in-hope-and-fear>

Fudan University

When it comes to this paper's analysis on the Sino-Hungarian relations related to security – not only Hungarian, but European or even Transatlantic – one cannot go next to one of the biggest concerns in the last couple of years. The partnership of a new campus for Fudan University in Budapest stirred not only the Hungarian public with reason this paper will explain later on, but scholars and politicians as well.

As for the Hungarian public, the project of the campus is not only concerning security matters, but it is undermining the capital's government's plan of a student city which is supposed to be built in the area where Fudan University will have its campus based on the previous negotiations.

The relationship between the opposition led government of the capital of Budapest and the government of the country is not on its bright side. There is barely any agreement between the two parties but it seemed that the envisioned student city which would have provided affordable housing for many university students and other facilities has been a common point.

In 2020 though, the government announced its new project with the Chinese Government on Fudan University, to build a campus to the school in Budapest to be the first city in Europe to do so. As an aftermath of the announcement, many demonstrated against the plan stating that Fudan University is heavily influenced by the communist government of China and could be operating as an informational hub for the Communist Party. The worry is not groundless. Fudan University is one of

the top elite schools of China which opened its National Intelligence College in 2011 to nurture future experts in intelligence sector.⁴⁴

Also as seen before in the case of Paks 2 deal with Russia, the Belgrad-Budapest Railway with China, the construction of the campus of Fudan University seems to be a dissatisfactory deal for Hungary.

The builder of the campus is the China State Construction Engineering Corporation which is banned by the United States of being tied to the military sector in China. Not even the fact that the contractor of the campus can be a catalysator to weaken the US-Hungary relations, but the construction is planned to be paid by Chinese loan with Chinese contractor and building materials.⁴⁵

Amid the sign of the deal of the Fudan University Campus, the Chinese defense Minister Wei Feng said that even future joint military drills and exchanges are likely to happen between the two countries.

Besides the Fudan University campus in Budapest, China has other ways to get their intelligence service into the Schengen zone of Europe.

The CCP's Confucius Institute Network has been on the watchlist of many Western countries. Institutions were founded in many Western states before, but they have been banned or terminated their contract due to security threats. In Hungary, such worries never come up regarding to the Institute, moreover, the country has 5 Confucius Institutions as of today.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Albert, Eleanor. Hungarians Spurn Chinese-Backed University Campus. The Diplomat. 2021

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/hungarians-spurn-chinese-backed-university-campus/>

⁴⁵ Tyszka, Franciszek. Analysis: Controversy over the construction of a Chinese university campus in Budapest. Centre for Eastern Studies. 2021

⁴⁶ Kraemer, Richard and Janda, Jakub. Orban's Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

After the announcement of the campus and the controversial deal, there were many protests against those by the people of Hungary. Along the protest, there were many other actions showing the people's support against the campus. One of it was the changes of street names city wide in Budapest. Streets named as Dalai Lama, Uyghur Martyrs and Free Hong Kong appeared.

Showing support of the protesters, many international media outlets reported the demonstrations, for example the Reuters, CNN and the Diplomats.

Hungary as China's Trojan Horse

Risk of the Policy on Security

After getting through the above-mentioned points, the thesis is going to analyze the "Eastern Opening" policy effect on security.

First, there will be a summary of the security risk for Hungary's national security as of.

Then secondly, the paper is going to explain the risk for European security, and lastly, an analysis of the policy's effect on transnational security.

But before moving on to the security analysis, the thesis would like to briefly explain the Trojan Horse in international relations. One might hear many times the term of Trojan Horse when it comes to big powers with developing countries, using the term for countries which are heavily dependent on other countries in sectors, investments etc. so the powerful country can influence the dependent one to do as it beneficial

for the powerful to achieve its goals.⁴⁷

Throughout the years, Hungary has been called the possible Trojan Horse of not only China but Russia as well.

National Security

When it comes to the concerns of Hungary's national security the sovereignty of the country is the most important aspect.

The first thing to mention regarding to the "Eastern Opening" on Hungary's security are the dissatisfactory deals, the country made with not only China, as the main focus of country of this thesis, but as listed in the thesis, with Russia as well.

The loan getting from Russia to the Paks 2 project make the country more dependent on Russia not only in the energy sector but financially as well due to the loan for the project.

As for China, first of all the trade share of the two countries evidently have not raised the expected amount. Indeed, China is one of the most important trading partners of the country outside of the European Union.

However, the expected raise in the export-import is yet to happen. During analyzing

⁴⁷ Rothgeb, John M. "Trojan Horse, Scapegoat, or Non-Foreign Entity: Foreign Policy and Investment Penetration in Poor Countries." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, no.2 : 227–65. 1987
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/174012>.

the export-import between the other two key partners within the “Eastern Opening” it is clear that trade volume with those countries have not raised either. Furthermore, with Russia, both export and import share declined. The highly anticipated investment flow from China also yet to come to the country. China has been announced as the main partner for economic relations within the “Eastern Opening” yet the awaited results are not there while the country is continuously getting into trouble with its Western partners in the political sphere because of the desired economic benefits. The deal of the Belgrad-Budapest Railway and the campus of Fudan University do not in the help of the country in any means either. Both projects tie Hungary onto China for decades because of the loans involved in the deals and give the opportunity to influence the country through these. Not to mention the security risk with the Fudan University campus, which not only give the possibility to the Chinese intelligence agency to enter the Schengen zone and basically be the hub of it, but create internal conflict as the field the campus is supposed to be build which had been already reserved by the capital’s government for a domestic project to provide housing for students of low income. The construction of the Fudan campus clearly has negative effect on Hungary’s education, hence its security.

With the emerging political ties, the country is defending China and all the other two main autocratic partners within the strategy, Russia and Turkey in the international scene.

Ever since 2010, Hungary has changed its attitude towards the EU. With the continuous criticism against the EU’s sanctions and statements and even vetoing them getting the EU further away from the country. The previous “Dare to be small”

approach changed to the “Dare to be big” one.⁴⁸ The country ever since expresses its position and even opposition strongly in the institutions of the European Union. It is likely to say, that Hungary is not pursuing any win-win situation in the scene of the EU, but rather see all as a win or lose one. This aggressive opposition and performance can endanger the country’s security overall as it is seen in the figures before, the country is still heavily dependent on the EU both in export-import and in investments and has not been able to shrunken down as planned with the “Eastern Opening”.

EU Security

The European Union security is at risk for a long time now. One of the main risks of the EU is regarding to its unity.

Because of the emerging Euroscepticism since the 2000s and through the BREXIT, the COVID-19 pandemic, the once model system is in danger by internal threats as well as external.

Ever since the “Eastern Opening” has been introduced, Hungary has been against the European Union’s unity.

From being a teacher’s pet of the EU during the 2000s, became the bad boy of it after

⁴⁸ Kraemer, Richard and Janda ,Jakub. Orban’s Hungary: A Russia and China Proxy Weakening Europe. European Values Center for Security Policy. 2021

the start of the second era of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's government since 2010.⁴⁹ (et. Szent-Iványi) The risk of the Residency Bond Program, or the Fudan University effect the European Union's security as well hence the common Schengen zone.

The foreign policy and the populist approach of Orbán's government can cause a fragmentation within the European Union. Now the war in Ukraine also threatens the EU. As mentioned before, Hungary is opposing the EU's sanction package regularly.

Organized crime is another risk for the EU. With the Residency Bond Program, many from outside the EU was able to enter the Schengen area without a thorough background check which raise concerns about the security not only to Hungary but to the EU.

Transatlantic Security

With the emerging good relations between China and Hungary, the country became a liability for the security within NATO because of the seen loyalty from Hungary's side towards China and other eastern states. As of in the European Union, Hungary sided with China in many situations.

The cooperation between China and the CEE region through the 16+1 Regional

⁴⁹ Szent-Iványi, István. 2020. Quo vadis Hungaria? [Where Is Hungary Heading?]: Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Strategic Vision. Republicon Intézet

Platform and the Belt and Road Initiative also makes the US harder to compete with China. It is added more layers to the already high scale trade war between China and the United States.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

During the last 12 years of the Orbán's government, Hungary started to shift away from the European Union and Transatlantic allies politically and with values as well. The country is trying to be appear more appealing for FDI from eastern countries while trying to build political ties to build its own illiberal state.

For the conclusion of the thesis, take a look again to the questions and answers them.

1. Question

The “Eastern Opening” is a risk for Hungary's position in the European Union and in the transatlantic allies and also for their security, or simply a balanced foreign policy to navigate in the new challenges and multipolar world order as the foreign policy and many Hungarian politicians claim?

During the research it became clear, that behind the “Eastern Opening” policy there is not only the desire of economic benefits as a pragmatic approach toward foreign policy.

The “Eastern Opening” aims to shift Hungary away from the Western economies and values as well, while close ties with autocrat states such as Russia, Turkey or China as the key elements of the policy.

For Hungary, those countries became the model of the illiberal state which the

country want to become.

While it seems that some aspects of the policy in fact reacting to the new changing world order and trying to strengthen its economy, the economic results are not looking good.

While the country is diligently trying to balance between the West and the East, the expected results in economy are not occurred. It seems that the price the country is paying politically to China for the economic benefits are creating a clearly unbalanced deal. The influence China has on Hungary seems to come from the nature of China's model state in Hungary's illiberal democracy approach rather than the visioned economic benefits.

The growing political loyalty towards China create tension with the European Union and the country's Transatlantic allies. The continuous vetos and criticism in towards the EU not only about China but with the current war in Ukraine. The country is shifting away from the EU while trying to maintain the pragmatic foreign policy.

2. Question

The expected economic gain from the policy is worth the risk for the country or not?

The "Eastern Opening" was visioned as an answer to the country's struggle regarding to the loss because of the global economic crisis and would make the country more independent from the European Union to create a realist foreign policy instead of the more idealistic one as before.

Analyzing the data and the important cooperation between the countries, it is clearly

seen that there is only a minimal change in the trade flow or investment coming to Hungary comparing that to the amount of commitment and gesture the country is willing to make towards China in the recent years, which does not seem rational. Even though China invests the most to Hungary in the CEE region, those investments are beneficial for the multinational companies as mentioned before that the share of FDI within the Hungarian own countries is minimum. Of course, even from multinational companies pay taxes and contribute to the economy, but sustainable growth cannot be present with the current situation.

It is clear based on the evidence this paper is introducing that the perceived or real benefits of the close ties are not paying off for the country and there is also criticism on the government's actions, yet Hungary still making those steps.

The reason behind that is not clear. But based on this paper the following factors can be taken into account:

First of all, the ideology of the foreign policy. As seen in chapter 3, ideology plays a big role in the actions of Prime Minister Orbán, as of to build an illiberal state. This requires friendship and close relations with countries which has the desired attributes such as China.

Second of all, the country is trying to be more independent from its European partners in term of economy and politics as well.

Lastly, Prime Minister Orbán's vision for the country in the next ten years is be connected with the far point of the world. Regarding to Orbán, Hungary repeatedly has been stuck between blocks in history before and a new model of globalization

for the country is necessary.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Orban, Balazs. Itt a következő évtized Orbán Viktor által vázolt Magyar stratégiája. 2023. Mandiner
https://mandiner.hu/cikk/20230104_itt_a_kovetkezo_evtized_orban_viktor_atal_vazolt_magyar_strategiaja

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Abstract

지난 몇 년 동안 헝가리 외교 정책의 발전과 엄청난 놀라움을 엿보기 위해서는 1990년대를 되돌아볼 필요가 있습니다. 1990년 소련이 무너졌다. 이 사건과 헝가리의 정치적 변화 이후에 헝가리의 외교 정책에 대한 관점이 바뀌었습니다.

새로운 민주적 헝가리 정부는 47년 동안 헝가리에 존재했던 소비에트/공산주의 영향력에서 근본적으로 단절하는 것을 목표로 삼았습니다. 새로운 외교 정책은 세 가지 주요 목표를 기반으로 했습니다.

다음은 북대서양 및 유럽 방향, 지역 정책 및 인접 국가의 헝가리인 지원에 따른 것입니다.

다른 정치적 견해를 가진 정부가 전환기의 다음 몇 년 동안 왔다가 사라졌지만, 이 세 가지 추진력은 수십 년 동안 한 번도 바뀌지 않았습니다.

최초의 오르반 정부(1998-2002)조차도 동일한 외교 정책 패턴의 연속성에 계속 참여했으며 오르반 자신은 1990년대-2000년대 동안 중국과 중국의 공산주의적 가치에 대해 거대한 비평가였습니다.

2000년대 초반부터 아시아-태평양 지역이 헝가리의 외교 정책에서 중요했지만 2008년 경제 위기와 유럽 동부 내 유럽 회의론이 고조될

때까지 동유럽 국가들과의 긴밀한 유대 관계는 그다지 중요하지 않았다는 사실도 언급해야 합니다. 헝가리의 외교 정책에 있어 지속적이고 중요한 주제입니다.

헝가리 정부는 2012년 공식적으로 '동방 개방'이라는 새로운 외교 정책을 발표했다.

대외정책이 다소 불확실했던 과거 정부들과 달리 오르반 새 행정부는 유럽연합에 대해 대립적인 태도를 취하기 시작했고(앞서 유럽 회의론이 부상하면서 언급했듯이) 동반구와의 관계를 강화하기 시작했습니다. 러시아, 중국 및 터키와 같은 국가에 중점을 둡니다. 정부는 새로운 외교신탁을 선택한 이유는 세계 경제와 정치의 변화에 대응하고 유럽연합(EU)과의 독립성을 강화하기 위한 것이라고 밝혔다.

“동방개방” 정책은 세 가지 주요 관찰을 바탕으로 도입 및 구축되었습니다.

우선 경제가 지속적으로 변화하고 있기 때문에 신흥동부 등 역동적으로 발전하는 국가 및 지역과 좋은 관계를 유지해야 합니다.

또한 2000년대 초반에는 헝가리의 주요 우선순위가 EU와 NATO 가입이었기 때문에 이들 국가의 시장에 대한 초점이 부족했습니다.

둘째, 헝가리는 아시아 국가와 구소련 국가 모두에 접근할 수 있는 좋은 위치에 있기 때문에 정부는 지리적 위치를 활용할 기회를 깨달았습니다. 이러한 지리적 위치는 중국을 유럽에서 중국의 물류 및 운송 허브로 높일 수 있는 기회를 제공합니다.

마지막으로 보다 동양적인 외교정책의 또 다른 동기

헝가리 국가 이익을 세계 무대에서 적절하게 대표하는 것은 국가가 보다
가시적이고 관련 전 세계 및 지역 참가자의 가능한 지원을 기반으로
구축할 수 있어야만 가능하다는 가정이었습니다.

또한 이 정책 뒤에는 변화하는 세계 질서에서 헝가리를 더 나은 위치에
두려는 단순한 경제적 또는 정치적 목표 이상이 있다는 것을 깨달을
필요가 있습니다. 2000년 말, 2010년 초 폭풍우가 몰아친 이후 유럽 연합
내부에 공백이 생긴 상태에서 헝가리 정부는 중국, 러시아 또는 터키와
같은 국가를 기반으로 자체적인 자유주의 국가를 건설하기 시작했습니다.
정책 내에서 새롭게 발견된 친자유주의 국가의 모델과 가까운 파트너가
권위주의 국가이기 때문에 정부는 대중과 국제 현장에서 엇갈린
피드백을 받았습니다.

빅토르 오르반(Viktor Orbán) 총리의 헝가리 동부 개방 정책, 중국의
일대일로(BRI), 구 16+1(구 17+1) 구상 이후 시진핑(習近平) 국가주석
하에서 헝가리-중국 경제 및 정치적 유대가 점점 더 강해졌습니다.

헝가리는 2012년 16+1 구상과 2013년 일대일로 구상(BRI)에 가입했으며
중국도 헝가리-EU 관계에서 중요한 요소가 되었습니다. 서방 국가들은
헝가리가 EU의 통합을 손상시킬 수 있는 중국의 "꼭두각시" 또는
"트로이 목마"였거나 되고 있다고 주장합니다.

국제 문제는 일반적으로 헝가리에서 국내 공공 문제를 일으키지 않지만
중국과 정부의 긴밀한 관계는 몇 가지 질문을 제기했습니다. 현재
우크라이나에서 벌어지고 있는 전쟁은 정부가 그러한 독재 국가들과
긴밀한 관계를 맺고 있는지에 대한 의문을 제기하기도 했습니다.

내 논문에서 나는 국가의 "동방 개방" 외교 정책이 유럽 연합 내에서 그리고 대서양을 횡단하는 동맹국에서 헝가리의 위치와 안보에 잠재적인 위험이 될 수 있는지 여부에 대한 질문에 대한 답을 찾고 있습니다. 아니면 여당의 주류 정치인들이 주장하는 것처럼 세계 경제와 세계 질서라는 새로운 바다를 항해하기 위한 균형 잡힌 외교 정책인가?

나는 또한 헝가리가 "동부 개방"에서 얻는 인지된 경제적 이득이 국가가 받는 위험과 비판의 가치가 있는지 여부에 대한 질문에 답하려고 노력하고 있습니다.

키워드: 헝가리, 중국, 외교정책, 동방개방, 안보

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