

## *Rusyns in the aspect of security policies*

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**Abstract:** The Rusyn represents ethnic minorities, living in contemporary Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Serbia, and descendants of those emigrated from these countries in the late 19 c. reside in Australia, Canada, and The United States. The centre of the best reputation for researches in Rusyn culture and history has formed around Prof. Paul Robert Magocsi, chair of Dept. Ukrainian Studies at Toronto University, and lately enriched by activities of the new generation of scholars as P. Krafcik. There are three universities in Europe with departments for Rusyn studies, in Preshov (Slovakia), Nyíregyháza (Hungary) and Novi Sad (Serbia).

Rusyns constitute officially recognized ethnic minorities in almost every European countries they live in, but not Ukraine. Though inhabitants in Western Ukraine, who identify themselves Rusyn, represent the largest part of The Rusyn worldwide, according to the Ukrainian laws, there no such ethnic minority exists.

The situation in neighbouring Slovakia has become quite different since the collapse of the socialism. For the last two decades, Rusyns in Slovakia have elaborated their codified literary language (since it has been missing for centuries, thus Rusyn authors has written in Latin, Church Slavonic, then Russian, a few of them in Ukrainian, and the most in various vernaculars), they established a Department of Rusyn Studies (while in Hungary the Rusyn and Ukrainian Dept., founded by the pioneer scholar István Udvari, has significantly reduced soon after the tragic death of the “founding father”), and, last but not least, a PhD program in Rusyn studies has been accredited at Preshov University (chaired by Prof. Anna Plishková), being the unique as such in the world.

The fear in Ukraine has rooted in the history of Transcarpathia: it had not been a part of Ukraine before it became a district of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in results of the World War II. Earlier it formed a part of the Hungarian Kingdom during centuries, and after the First World War it was attached (for two decades, as the history turned) to the newly then shaped Czechoslovakia.

Consequently, efforts by some right-wing political movements in Hungary, which endeavour to reconnect the Carpathian territories to Hungary, are nowadays of extreme risk. First, Ukraine has lost and is probably losing some territories in its south and west, where the state control is quite weak over those districts are still (and hopefully remain) parts of the country. The fear for territorial instability is certainly increasing. West part of Ukraine has been the traditionally strongest bases of the stability of the Ukrainian State. Thus destabilizing any part of West Ukraine, even Transcarpathia, may result some sharpening of the threat of a new Cold War. Therefore the Rusyn question must not been only regarded in the frameworks of ethnic minorities and their rights, but in a wider sense of the international diplomacy and peace building.

**Keywords:** Transcarpathia, Rusyns, Ukraine, security policy

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The subject of researches in security policy is the study of perceptions, more than that of the realities, although the real situation is of enough importance as well.

The main question is not that something (a geographical place, a geopolitical situation or a social process) or somebody (a person, a political or cultural activist, or an ethnic or social group, a nationality, a political community) may be addressed as a threat (and if so, to what extent), but, and rather, to what extent can it imply a perception of fear.

As the answering acts are, at every case, consequences of the fear of the real threat or an imagined perception of being threatened.

Even the preventive aggression may be a result of the distress as being threatened in the case of no real danger. Therefore the subject of this paper is not the real threat by the Carpathian Rusyns, this very small and poor ethnic group, but the perceptions their entity may recall. Therefore the first task is to define them, describing their place and giving brief survey of their history (as arguments based on history are often main components of perceptions in security policy), then examine the possible consequences in the security policy of Ukraine, Hungary, Russia and Slovakia, even of the rest of the world.

Those who name themselves Rusyn are settled in Ukraine, mainly but not only in *Zakarpatskaya oblast* (“Transcarpathian County”), in a small number on its edge in Rumania, in the second largest number in East part of Slovakia (with their greatest cultural and science centre in Preshov), in a small number in South-Poland (those called “*Lemko*”-es), in a small number in Hungary (where the study and evaluation devoted them seems quite more than it would founded on their ratio among inhabitants, which phenomenon comes as a special consequence of the study of history of Hungary, Udvari, 1993, pp.105–138), then in significant number in Serbia (in historical districts of Bácska), last but not least, in the United States and Canada, where their world-wide recognized research centre works at the Toronto University, Ukrainian Studies, chaired by Prof. Magocsi, Paul Robert, and let us here highlight the most active colleague of him in Rusyn studies, Patricia Krafcik, not to forget about the significant number of other researchers. (From the study of Rusyn researches cf. Magocsi, *A Historiographical Guide...* 1974.)

The name Rusyn came from the historical term *Rus*’ meant in medieval times the *varjags* (Normans) founded the East Slavic State, then it became the name of the very state (Kievan Rus’). As it is well-known, the *roth* remained in Nordic languages (Swedish *Ryska* “Russian”), but in Finno-Ugric it refers to the Scandinavian people (Finnish *ruotsi* “Swedish”, Estonian *rootsi* “Swedish”), while the Kievan Rus’ called in Byzantine Greek for the name of normans, *Ρωσία*, “Kievan State”, then it went to the medieval Latin as *Ruthenus*, addressing the people of Kievan State, then, after the Mongol Period, the Moscovian Rus’. (Pritsak, 1991)

The medieval chronicles in Hungary addressed “Hungarian Ruthens” the members of the guards of the dauphin in the era of the Árpád’s House, who were of origin from the Kievan Rus’ (therefore, East Slavs, that is Ruthens), but no relation to Carpathian Land which was almost uninhabited in Middle ages. It was a “*gyepű*”, the desert territory of Medieval Hungary around the country, with purposes of defence. However, there are specialists of the opinion that this territory was not absolutely unoccupied, as the remnants of White Horvats might have stayed there, who had been followers of Christianity of Byzantine Rite since Cyril and Method’s era, when the last brother baptized them. In any case, the word “*Ruthens*” in the medieval Hungarian chronicles referred to the guards of the dauphin but not the local inhabitants of East-North Hungarian Kingdom, later addressed Carpathian Ruthenia. Whether

it was settled or not, inhabitants could not be of Kievan origin in the Middle Ages. (For White Horvats and also brief survey of that was said above: Magocsi, *People from Nowhere...*, 2006, esp. pp. 29–39., “The Early History of Rusyns from 5th to 15th Centuries”)

Later, after the Anjou time, some East Slavic people immigrated into former-desert territories of East-North Hungary (i.e. East part of Upper Hungary, now East Slovakia and Carpathian Ukraine). They were step by step guided by the *kenéz*-men, who were not noble but free persons and got privileges for their activity, conducting new settlers. It was a bit similar to the process of settlements in Central and Eastern Upper Hungary, where the “*soltész*”-men conducted German settlers, therefore the *soltész*-es had got privileges and their descendants upraise to the bourgeoisie of the free towns in Upper Hungary (actually, of German Law, as the guides with their settlements took the law-traditions, too, with their German inhabitants). This process does not concern us here, unless taking into consideration the conducting-German-settlers *soltész*-es were similar but not the same group as the *kenéz*-es, were conducting Slavic settlers. Their problem has still not so well-researched as that of the German *soltész*-es. (Even the monographer of the topic, Kőrmendy 1995, did not pay any piece of attention for the *kenéz*-es as parallels of *soltész*-es in those or neighbouring districts she studied.) That was fact the ancestors of The Rusyn might be some local inhabitants remained here from the West Horvats, and the main source was the immigration from East Slavic territories in 14–17 cc, led by *kenéz*-es. There was a legend about the Duke of Podolia, Theodor Koriatovich, who escaped from his enemies and came to Carpathian Rus’ with his people, in a huge number. He was a real person, son of Koriat (Lithuanian Karijotas, prince of Novohradak) as, a Lithuanian prince, nephew to Kestutis, who was the rival Duke of Lithuania when his other nephew, Jogaila, was ruling as Polish-Lithuanian king. It has still not convincingly researched why son of Koriat, “the founder of Rusyns’ territory”, Theodor, has had to escape, but it has demonstrated by Hodinka that he could not “found” an entire Carpathian Rus’ as he came with far smaller people as the legends say. (Hodinka, 1909.) Thus, the remnants of those Slavs lived here before the first Millennium (if they survived the invasion of the Tatars lead by Khan Batu in 1240–1241, which is hardly believable), then the new inhabitants came during the 14–17 cc, and some addition by Theodor, Son to Koriat, formed the Slavic people of North-East Carpathian lands. Their language was not unified and has still not been. The main groups of the Rusyns were the *Lemkos* in Poland, the *Hutsuls* in Maramarosh, between them the *Dolyshniany* (Lowlanders), *Verkhovynycy* (Highlanders), and

their subgroup next to *Hutsuls* called *Boikos*. (An outdated but carefully usable depiction is given in Bonkáló, *The Rusyns*, [1932], 1990, pp.60–84. “Rusyn Ethnographic Groups”)

The recent situation in figures is as follows (according to Magocsi, *People from Nowhere...*, 2006, 25, table 2:

“Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnographic Groups”

<i>Group</i>	<i>Number of villages</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
WESTERN		
Rusnaks	283	27
Lemkos	179	17
TRANSITIONAL	105	10
EASTERN		
Dolyniane	401	38
Verkhovyntsi	69	6
Hutsuls	24	2
TOTAL	1061	100

Up to the 18th century, the Hungarian sources were written in Latin used the term *Ruthenus*, borrowed from the Latin name of the inhabitants of the Kievan Rus’, addressing those are of Byzantine Rite and their liturgical language was the Church Slavonic. Later the sources written in Hungarian used its translation “*Magyar Oroszok*” (Hungarian Russians) or simply “*oroszok*” (Russians) for those were of Byzantine Rite, nevertheless they were already partly Hungarian-speaking population but with liturgy in Church Slavonic. In Hungarian, e.g. in the time of the resurrection led by Rákóczi, the “*orosz vallású*” (sb of Russian religion) were used for addressing those were of Byzantine rite, actually, they were the most engaged people to the Duke Franz Rákóczi, as he and citing him, the great historian of them, Anton Hodinka called “*gens fidelissima*” (Hodinak, 1937) The very Russians were named in Hungarian sources as “*muszka*” (Moscovites) up to 1848 when due to the Hungarian revolution and war for the independence the “*orosz*” became to name the very Russians (instead of “*muszka*”, Moscovian), and the “Hungarian Russian” became to be named even in the Hungarian sources as “*Rusyn, Rusnak*”. The very people, from the 18th century, when its establishment began to be shaped, used the word “Rusyn”. Their branch went to south part of then-Hungarian Kingdom in the 18th century, and inhabited the Bácska and Bánát regions, called itself as Rusák and have been calling themselves as such. These Rusyns in contemporary Serbia are not subject to treat in this paper. Summarising, the Rusyn was their own self-nomination, the “*orosz*” (Russian) meant in Hungarian those followed the Byzantine rite, and “*muszka*” (Moscovian) referred in Hungarian sources to the Russians of The Tsarist Empire. Then, from

1848, the Rusyn went to the Hungarian language, too, referring to the Carpathian Rusyns, the “*orosz*” (Russian) changed and referred to the Russians of the Tsarist Empire, and the “*muszka*” (muscovite) got out of using. (Udvari, 1994, p.16.)

Thus, the English word Carpatho-Ruthenian, Carpatho-Rusyn has borrowed from the self-nomination of the Carpathian Rusyns in former Hungarian Kingdom. The Rusyn awakeners, mainly Alexander Duchnovich in the first part of the 19th century, who lived and worked mainly in Preshov, called themselves Rusyns. Later they began to address to themselves as Russians, for in the second half of the 19th century their consciousness changed from unique Rusyn to the part-of Russian-people meaning. (Magocsi, *The Language Question...*, 1987.) As for the language, it was solidly studied by tragically early passed scholar István Udvari, the early 18th century was the time of Polish influence on the official documents issued by the bishops, then the local vernacular more and more influenced the written language of the eparchial documents, then from the turn of the 18/19 cc the newly born establishment began to write on the language of the people, however, it was not and still had not been codified. (His monograph by which he defended the grade Doctor of Academy was devoted to this question: Udvari, *Ruszin (kárpatukrán) hivatalos írásbeliség...*, 1995.) The bishops’ office used the local version of the Church Slavonic, with Polish then with vernacular forms, then from the 19th century a Rusyn literature were shaped, on vernacular, as for instance artificial folk-songs by Vasilij Dovhovich. From the middle of the 19th century, the literary Russian language was proposed by the most writers although it was not understandable for the people even seemed very artificial for those wrote poems in Russian. “The Shaping of a National Identity”, as to cite the title of great monograph about this epoch by Magocsi, was full of debates between Russophil, Rusynophil and, in lesser part, Ukrainophil intelligentsia. Magocsi gives a complete statistics about these three positions of cultural elite with biographies. (Magocsi, 1978, pp.282–311, Appendix 2.)

The “*ukrajinec*” (Ukrainian) ethnonym was already known among the Carpathian Rusyns but they did not refer it to themselves. A very narrow stratum of the Rusyn intelligentsia only began to use the word “*ukrajinec*” for self-nomination from the first decades of the 20th century, but before 1945 it was not been accepted even by the majority of the Rusyn intelligentsia. The name Ukrainian only became official in Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia after 1945 when the Carpathian Rus’ became a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and East Slovakia as part of Slovakia was a part of the artificial Czechoslovak state.

In the last, the Russian and Ukrainian were the both, parallel used literary languages for Rusyns until 1953, when a decision made by the Central Committee of the Slovak Communists' Party ordered Ukrainian for official language of the Rusyns in Slovakia. Nor the schoolbooks, nor any other conditions were available, and the soviet school-books and other manuals were quickly imported did not attract the sympathy of the local inhabitants. The result was a phenomenal Slovakisation of Rusyns.

After collapsing of the Soviet Union and ending the socialist regimes in Central Europe the Rusyn awakening became to develop, even faster as it was able to be tolerated for any partners. (Udvari, 1994.)

In February 17, 1990, Uzhorod, the founding convention of the Carpathian Rusyns' Society was held. It programmed to manage the cultural organisation of the Rusyns in Carpathian Region also outside, the advancement of the study of history of Rusyns, their culture, to keep their oral and written even material heritage as archival sources, archaeological items and historical buildings, and to establish a Centre for Rusyn Researches at the Uzhorod State University. Though these were real and acceptable purposes, the Carpathian Rusyns' Society went ahead and programmed the autonomy of Transcarpathia from widening the Rusyn political rights.

The neighbouring association was established in Medzilaborce, Slovakia, March, 1990, under the name *Rusyn'ska Obroda* (Rusyn Renaissance). Its activity became significant in the field of publishing, as issuing the journals *Rusin* and *Narodny Novinky*, also many books in Rusyn culture as for instance Fedynyšynec, 1992, and a lot of others.

Then the first world congress of Rusyns was held in Preshov, March 23–24, 1991. Deputies from five countries declared the Rusyn is branch of the East Slavic languages as coequal with Ukrainian, and decided to publish periodicals in Rusyn also establish new association and NGOs for advancement of Rusyn culture.

As for the language, it is quite sure the Rusyn is a coequal East Slavic language, according to the linguists in the field, but it hardly can be decided by cultural, moreover, political organisations, NGOs. (For the linguists' viewpoint cf. Dulichenko, 2006.)

Another societies were soon established as the Lemko Association (*Stovarysynja Lemkiv*) in Legnica, Poland (est. April 1990); the Society of Friends of Subcarpathian Rus' (*Spolecnost pratel Podkarpatske Rusi*) in Prague (est. October 1990); and the *Ruska Matka* (Rusyn Matka)

in Ruski Kerestur, Yugoslavia (est. December 1990). By the spring of 1991, a sixth one was established, this time in Hungary: the Rusyn organization in Hungary (*Magyarországi Ruszinok Szervezete*) in Budapest (est. May 1991). (Magocsi, 1995)

For the further development of Rusyn movements, on recent level of the studies in the field, and for the latest situation see Plishkova–Magocsi, *Language and national identity...* 2009.

It is worth to mention, in the recent days a PhD program in Rusyn philology is already accredited at the Preshov University under conduction of Prof. Anna Plishková. This is the unique place on the world where one can obtain a science grade in Rusyn philology.

What was the reaction of the Ukrainian powers? The fear, of course. As the Rusyns lived in frameworks of the Hungarian Kingdom until 1918, then in Czechoslovakia, it was logical to fear the burning of a new political movement even the danger of separatism.

Moreover, a small and short-time existing political formation has already established in the 20th century, due to Rusyn movements, in the most sensible sphere of Ukrainians: on the Polish-Ukrainian border, The Lemko Rusyn Republic (1918–1920), cf. Magocsi, 1993a. The roots of Ukrainian fears in historical traditions may be drawnd in the Habsburg-Galizian-Rusyn-Ukrainian relations, cf. Magocsi, *The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism...*, 2002.

Nowadays, in my opinion, the danger is as follows: first, Hungary's policy must be very careful, for the defending the rights of Hungarians in Carpathian Ukraine may automatically burn the fire in Rusnys. Second, if the borders would not be saints – although hopefully they are –, Carpathian Rus' would rather to connect to Slovakia than to Hungary. This is not the aim of Hungarian politicians, as well. Thus the Hungarian NGOs and some political organisations should not encourage the territorial dividing of Ukraine, since this would led to enriching the Slovak State but not of Hungary. Therefore, the cultural autonomy, usage of language can be the very purposes which can be and must be provided by any tool. However, some far right-wing movements should not take into consideration, that we have already had experiences with Russian tanks and soldiers, and nobody wish them again at the border of Hungary, of course.

For the science and cultural providing of Rusyns, Hungary take much, although after passing Professor Udvari, the academic researches in Carpathian history and Rusyn philology suffered a decline. Thanks to Professor Plishkova, she continues in Preshov the work was based by Udvari.



Hungary's official policy seems to be still moderate in comparison with the "Jobbik" Party (the right-wing opposition to the recent Hungarian government; its name means "The Better" which in Hungarian sounds "The Righter", too), as the government provides Ukraine with gas (according to statements by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has been told in the state television), and by quite careful political agreements, too, declaring the wish for remaining Ukraine a stable state. Thus no Ukrainian fear should be arise by the recent Hungarian politics unless the right-wings in Hungary feed it. On the other hand, The Ministry of Human Resources in Hungary ("*Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma*" in Hungarian), which is responsible for the education and culture, too, provided with huge money the establishing of a new but virtual Centre for Rusyn Studies at the Ferenc Gál Theological College in Szeged (South Hungary), and this imaginary institution is officially located in Szarvas (South-East Hungary, near to the border with Rumania). No Rusyn population inhabits that territory and there is no physical building or infrastructure for such a research institution in Szarvas. The members of this virtual research centre work at home (e.g. in Nyíregyháza, where the former great specialist István Udvari has founded a Rusyn Dept. of glamorous reputation, located next to Transcarpathia, and instead of developing that already existed one, a new but virtual centre has established far from any Rusyn-connected place), and they earn not virtual but real extra money by means of being members of this virtual institution. It is connected to the Roman Catholic Theological College in Szeged, probably also because of the church institutions have nowadays better reputation in the eyes of the recently decision makers. (According to the information by Tibor Popovich, former head of the Centre for Rusyn Researches in Budapest.)

It is completely correct to provide the cultural life and researches in the Rusyn culture while The Rusyn are suspicious in the eyes of Ukrainian politics. Although this Ukrainian suspicion and fear seems to be quite exaggerated, it may be understood and taken into consideration, for the maintenance of the international stability Slovakian and mainly Hungarian decision makers should more provide the researches in Ukrainian studies, too, as both country are members of the NATO also The European Union. While in Slovakia, the Ukrainian and Rusyn studies are concentrated at the same university in Preshov, where the respective population and the neighbouring Ukraine are nearby, on contrary, there are there are three universities in Hungary, having departments of Ukrainian, and now a fourth but imaginary place for Rusyn researches has established, though the Rusyn minority represent far lesser ration in Hungary as in Slovakia. (In the latter, a worldwide respected PhD program and

research centre works under chairing prof. Anna Plishkova, thanks to concentrating but not decentralization of the supplies and power.)

Research and development make effects on perceptions in the security policy, moreover, the cultural life and the studies in history were, have been and will be of great importance in East European national states (which consist of multinational and multi-ethnic population as well). There is no room for the comparative analysis of Hungarian, Slovakian and Ukrainian security policies in this paper (although the author is going to do it in the further one). We have showed the factors and the historical background of the Rusyn problem and have given some examples to demonstrate how it is a complicate and delicate question.

The recent number of the Rusyns, according to Magocsi, *The People from Nowhere...*, 2006, p.11.

Country	Official data	Estimate:
Ukraine (Transcarpathia 650,000; Lemko Rusyns resettled 90,000)	10,000	740,000
Slovakia	55,000	130,000
Poland	5,900	60,000
Serbia	16,000	25,000
Romania	200	20,000
Czech Republic	1,100	12,000
Hungary	1,100	6,000
Croatia	2,300	5,000
Unites States	12,500	620,000
Canada	---	20,000
Australia	---	2,500



The contemporary territory of Carpathian Rusyns, according to Magocsi, *Persistence of Regional Cultures...*, 1993, page 6.

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