



# HungarianAmerica Foundation, Inc.

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Unique Celebration of Hungary's Accession to the European Union

Washington, D.C., May 1, 2004 – The only Hungarian event in Washington held the hour of Hungary's joining the European Union was a reception hosted by the HungarianAmerica Foundation in the evening of April 30. Over 40 people – mostly young Hungarian professionals – attended the event at the Kossuth House, a Hungarian cultural icon in the heart of America's capital.

The invited guests at this unique celebration of Hungary's accession to the European Union included *Mr. Viktor Szederkényi*, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Hungary, Washington; *Mr. Philip T. Reeker*, Deputy Chief of Mission Designate, U.S. Embassy, Budapest; and *Mr. Antoine Van Der Haegen*, Minister Counselor, Delegation of the European Commission to the United States.

The reception was opened with the national anthems of Hungary and the United States and an introductory statement by *Dr. Sándor Végh*, President of the Foundation. He emphasized that while Hungary's membership in the EU means new opportunities for Hungarian professionals in the US, "It also entails new responsibilities for this group. Furthermore, it brings a new sense of belonging, which this ex-patriot community risked losing when they left their country."

Mr. Viktor Szederkényi pointed out that Hungary has always belonged to small and large alliances by choice or tragic events, but never belonged to one so deep in structure and so rich in substance such as the united Europe, which is free and democratic. "Hungary does believe that an enlarged European Union will result in stronger transatlantic ties, as only a strong and true cooperation will enable us to face today's challenges."

On behalf of Secretary of State Powell and the State Department, Mr. Philip Reeker underscored that the United States has always strongly supported Hungary's accession to the EU, as part of a Europe "whole, free, and at peace." Hungary and the other new members are not just joining the European Union, they are joining the US-EU partnership, united by shared values and shared responsibilities. "EU enlargement is good for Hungary, good for the EU itself, good for the United States, and good for our transatlantic relationship." Mr. Reeker also delivered congratulations and summarized his remarks in Hungarian.

As a veteran of EU enlargements, Mr. Antoine Van Der Haegen offered a historical perspective of the process of accessions that led to this fifth and largest EU expansion that included Hungary. He echoed the theme that EU membership means new opportunities and responsibilities for Hungarians, but reminded that all nations involved will have to continue to work hard to make the best of this historic opportunity.

The ceremony was closed with the anthem of the European Union.

The rest of the evening marked the opening of the photo exhibition, "Budapest & Transylvania Through My Lens," by the internationally acclaimed photographer *Stephen Spinder*.

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The HungarianAmerica Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in the District of Columbia in 2003, for charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes. The detailed account of our mission and activities are listed on our Website at <http://www.hungarianamerica.com/>