



HOMECOMING FORUM

Washington, D.C.

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Press Advisory

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February 24, 2003

Homecoming Forum

Saturday, March 8, 2003

9:30 AM – 4:30 PM

3910 Shoemaker Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20008

The New Generation Hungarian Professionals and Scholars in the United States - How to Utilize their Expertise for Hungary's Benefit

Under the patronage of Ambassador András Simonyi, the *Homecoming Forum* is a joint initiative of the Embassy of Hungary and representatives of the “New Generation Hungarian Professionals” of the Washington Metropolitan area. The fact that this Forum has come about shows that Hungary has recognized the importance of keeping these professionals in the intellectual, cultural, and financial circulation of their homeland.

The Homecoming Forum purports to be a launch pad for a more continuous, systematic, and perhaps institutionalized exchange of information between Hungary's public/private sectors and the *new generation Hungarian expatriates* living in the U.S.

The ultimate goal of this Forum is to capitalize on Hungarian and Hungarian-American intellectuals, scientists, businesspersons, and celebrities living in the U.S. This may not strike as novelty, but the generation that we turn to, is *the* new one. Building on the lessons of the historic emigration, now the time has come to embrace the new generation more consciously and to address the issues that would help their participation in Hungarian-American matters, and thus contribute to the development of Hungary.

We believe that this Forum will be the first in a global campaign that will ultimately engage thousands of Hungarians around the world to reconnect them to their roots.

Goals

- To discuss and evaluate the experience of the new generation of Hungarian professionals and students in the US
- To find ways for Hungary to benefit from their expertise and facilitate their return to Hungary
- To tap into the talents and resources of young Hungarian-Americans
- To show the support of the Hungarian Government for the return of Hungarian professionals and students

Over

Expected Outcome

This Forum aims to produce concrete suggestions that can be implemented via governmental and private channels to boost the flow of intellectual, network, and material capital from the US to Hungary. The outcome will be submitted in a report to the respective ministerial portfolios and their opposition counterparts, as well as to relevant private – both profit and non-profit - organizations.

- Report will be compiled based on the results of the one-day conference
- Online resource center will be created for Hungarians studying and working in the US
www.hungarianamerica.com
- Boost information exchange.
- Demonstrate the mutual benefits that Hungary and its expatriates could gain:
 - a) Hungary will be able to tap more into the underutilized resources and may regain some of the loss generated by the massive brain-drain of its human capital.
 - b) The expatriates will benefit from improved legal regulations, the creation of institutions, as well as online resource centers and databases that would facilitate their return to Hungary.

Topics

Contra-Brain Drain

How to encourage young professionals to return to Hungary

- a. Opportunity for Hungarian private and public sector organizations to recruit Hungarians from the US
- b. Opportunity for young Hungarian professionals in the US to find out about employment/professional opportunities in Hungary
- c. Information from the Hungarian Government on job market opportunities
- d. Young professionals having returned to Hungary could form support groups and mentor new returnees
- e. Re-employment incentives
- f. Develop tools for information sharing: Creation of an online resource center for Hungarian students and professionals in the US (see below in the outcomes)
- g. How to preserve linkages/attachment to Hungary on the part of the new generation of Hungarians living in the US (e.g. participation in civic duties, voting)
- h. Support for cultural re-adaptation
- i. Legal requirements and implications

Contributions from US

How the new generation of Hungarians can remain in the US and contribute to the development of Hungary: Not necessarily a matter of returning to Hungary, although that as an ultimate goal should be part of the discussions

- a. How can this fit into the “Smart Hungary” program to utilize the talents and skills of US-trained potential workforce (cf. Embassy web site)
- b. Opportunity for Hungarian professionals and researchers in the US to find out about professional collaboration opportunities in Hungary
- c. Legal requirements and implications

Value transfer

How to integrate relevant values, expertise, and experience gained in the US that may be beneficial to the development of Hungary

- a. Incentives to businesses employing persons returning from US, e.g. tax breaks
- b. Provide information on investment opportunities and legal regulations to US businesses interested in moving into Hungary
- c. Assist 2nd generation Hungarian-Americans to return to Hungary (e.g., “Homecoming” programs can be organized to encourage visits and interactions with Hungary)
- d. Development of a culture of mobility, both geographically and within careers and institutions which will encourage growth and allow for a more varied, non-static workforce
- e. Ways in which the values acquired/generated by young professionals can be used in Hungary

Legal status

- a. Legal status for Hungarian citizens (students, professionals) temporarily staying (several years) in the US but not intending to immigrate to the US
- b. What other countries do
- c. Ability for Hungarians staying in the US to:
 - i. Vote in Hungarian elections, absentee ballot
 - ii. Stay and work in Hungary for brief time periods (e.g. telecommute from Hungary, spend extended Holiday breaks in Hungary) including the ability to bring work equipment (portable computers, etc.) into the country
 - iii. Arrange flexible military service conditions
- d. Work status for people who return to Hungary

Next Steps

Continuity and Information Exchange

- Institutionalization, so political changes in Hungary and the US do not affect the continuity of the program
- Set up a database with information on skills available and whether returning/seeking to return to jobs in Hungary, or interested in short-term opportunities; Also, firms, agencies, institutions in Hungary which can use this talent
- Set up a means of allowing those interested to communicate, i.e. an email list
- Information exchange; Mentoring

Format

- One-day Conference
 - a) Participants: 50-60 participants; Representing various disciplines (Science & Technology, Arts & Humanities, Politics & Diplomacy, Business & Commerce/Corporate, International Organizations, Legal, and Media); Representing various regions of the US.
 - b) Sessions: 4 topical sessions with break for lunch; each session opened by keynote address (5-8 minutes) followed by discussion; (all plenary).
- Expected VIPs: H.E. András Simonyi, Ambassador; H.E. Gábor Horváth, Consul General; Péter Becskeházy, US DoS, formerly, Cultural Attaché at the US Embassy, Budapest; and Dr. Peter Forgach, charitable donor for Hungarian scholarship foundation.

Closing Event at the Kossuth House:

Address: 2001 Massachusetts Ave., NW. Washington, D.C. 20036 Phone: 202 328-2630

- Event Closing Remark
- Short Film Screening
- Wine & Cheese Reception - Informal Discussion

Contact Organizers:

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