

Pro-Autonomy Hungarians in Romania's "Szeklerland" Might Spark a "Slovak Crisis" that Destabilizes "New Europe's" "Three Seas"

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The Romanian Prime Minister implied that pro-autonomy Hungarians in the "Szeklerland" region should be hung in their town squares.

Premier Mihai Tudose, who just resigned because of an [unrelated power struggle](#), was [responding](#) to the news that three ethnic Hungarian minority parties in the territory that they call "Szeklerland" had joined forces to lobby for autonomy in the central Romanian region of Transylvania, harshly promising that

"I have sent message that if the Szekler flag flies over the institutions over there, they will all fly next to the flag. Autonomy for Szeklers is out of the question."

His undiplomatic remark was met with instant condemnation from Budapest, which has been more active over the past few years in supporting the rights of its ethnic compatriots abroad that it feels were unfairly cut off from their homeland after the 1920 Treaty of Trianon.



Source: the author

Thus far the most newsworthy efforts in this sphere have recently been those related to the Hungarian minority in Ukraine's western region of [Transcarpathia](#), but the situation in Transylvania might be even more important because it involves developing hostilities between two NATO- and EU-member states in so-called "New Europe's" "[Three Seas](#)" region. The rising sense of national identity that's accompanied the recent surge of populism across the world has seen the politicized revival of the Hungarian diaspora issue in the heart of Europe, and Orbán's activism on this group's behalf could easily lead to the EU labeling him as the greatest threat to the bloc.

The organization's post-Brexit future is in doubt, and the Polish-Hungarian Strategic Partnership is working hard to reform the EU in making it more decentralized and sovereignty-friendly, but the most dramatic change could be the readjustment of some member states' internal borders in the continental heartland if the Hungarian minority decides to flex their political muscles. The people of "Szeklerland" are separated from Hungary proper by a swath of mostly Romanian-inhabited territory, but their pro-autonomy

efforts could encourage the fragmentation of the country along regional-centric lines and precipitate a constitutional crisis in the formally unitary state. It could also provoke a nationalist reaction from Romanians as well, thereby opening up a whole can of worms if it transforms into violence.

Romania and Ukraine aren't the only areas that could be affected by this process either, since Serbia's northern Vojvodina region has a small Hungarian minority near the borderland, though this "front" is less likely to see any "action" when compared to what might transpire in [Southern Slovakia](#). For hundreds of years, the territory of so-called "Upper Hungary" was regarded as an inseparable part of Hungarian Civilization, and approximately half a million Hungarians still live in Southern Slovakia and constitute a little less than 10% of the country's total population. That's why there's a high likelihood that any inadvertent crisis in "Szeklerland" will actually lead to a "Slovak Crisis" as well, though the latter could jeopardize the unity of the Visegrad Four and undermine the EuroRealist reform campaign if it's not preemptively dealt with by all responsible players.

The post presented is the partial transcript of the CONTEXT COUNTDOWN radio program on Sputnik News, [aired on Friday Jan 19, 2018](#):

https://video.img.ria.ru/Out/MP3/20180119/2018_01_19_CONTEXTCOUNTDOWN136190118_jsol1dxl4.bue.mp3

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