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# Hungarian Country Equity



## *Summary*

This study tries to shed light upon the unfavourable Hungarian reputation in Europe and the value of Hungarian country brand. In doing so, it explains the components and the formation of country image, association, awareness, loyalty and equity as well. The study concludes with showing the measures with which even small countries can improve their rankings in Simon Anholt's global nation brand and good country index charts. These charts are based on the largest scale social big data study ever conducted and they exercise influence on the countries' economic prospects. The study also reveals the global regions where the Hungarian government should focus country marketing in order to achieve the most rapid economic benefits.

**Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) codes:** R58, M31, M38

**Keywords:** the Hun heritage in Hungary, nation brand, country equity, good country index, the "Magyaristan" belt

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## UGROS ELIMINANDOS ESSE

"The Hungarians must be eliminated" as it was ordered by King Ludovicus of Germany in 907 AD, just before a major battle at today's Bratislava between Hungarians and Germans. It was a political judgement over the Hungarians issued by the West Europeans, and if we consider the Hungarian history in European context, the leaders of the West European nations have always been against Hungarian interests. In 1242, when the Hungarian king sacrificed his kingdom to protect the western parts of Europe against the Mongol or Tartar invasion, and then in 1526 when the

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Hungarian king gave his life and kingdom in order to stop the Ottoman Empire's westward expansion, no European rulers supported the Hungarians in any way. In the late 1600s, in the early 1700s and in 1849, the Hungarian movements and wars of independence against the House of Austria had been encouraged by the French only as long as their geopolitical interest required them to do so and then the Hungarian case was forsaken. After World War I in 1920 when the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had to be completely destroyed, the Hungarian Kingdom was divided by the French, English and American anti-German political interest among her neighbours, leaving only one third of the country's territory and resources. No other state suffered such a serious territorial loss after the two world wars. Then again in 1956 the great scale Hungarian civil uprising against the Soviet rule was also let down by the western democracies. After 1989 only the West European economies and markets profited from the broad scale liberalisation and privatisation of the Hungarian economy, and the expenses of the destruction of Hungarian economy were never fully compensated after joining the European Union in 2004. The very frequent infringement procedures in the 2010s, launched against Hungary in the EU, and the negligence of the EU Parliament shown towards the Hungarian efforts to protect the Schengen borders against illegal migration after 2015 also seem to confirm the general European negative attitude towards this country, with the only exception of the Polish.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the second meaning of "Hun" is either a person who is wantonly destructive or a German soldier, used in a usually disparaging manner. In 2010-2015, when the current author asked English native speakers studying at the International Study Programme of the Corvinus University of Budapest, if the word "Hun" aroused a negative feeling in them, the following dialogue would ensue:

'Why, of course not.'

'Be sincere. There would be no consequences if you tell me.'

'Well... yes.'

Neither in the social awareness of the super power of the world, the USA, is there a more favourable image of the Hungarian nation. In one of their most popular national songs from the time of the American Revolution, in the "Soldier's Joy", there is a line referring to the atrocities committed by the British soldiers against the American civilians that names the perpetrators like this: "the British and the Huns". The most popular army song from the two World Wars is the "Over There". One of its lines goes like this: "Johnny show the Hun, you're a son of a gun".

It can be rightfully assumed that the heritage of the Huns, who devastated half of Europe in a barbaric way and the only nation and country name (*Hungarian, Hungaria, Ungarisch, Ungarn, Hongrois, Hongrie, Ungherese, Ungheria, Húngaro, Hungria*, etc.) invokes some ill and unfavourable image in the American and West European social awareness. This is possibly the worst starting position in nation and country branding. Let us see what it is all about, and if this ill position can be cured, as well as what the chances of Hungary are in the competition of country branding and reputation.

## COUNTRY IMAGE

All countries have always had images. The image is an amorphous picture recorded in the minds of people due to childhood experiences, school studies, subjective impacts and feelings. According to Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) the country image like that of a corporation brand cannot be fully controlled by the government that wishes to reshape and form it. In their opinion the country image is based on perceptions and stereotypes and like a product brand it includes information both from facts and feelings. An image can be shaped by different events and it changes rather slowly.

The country image is such a multidimensional picture of the country of which the sources, the national economy, products, policy, history, culture, geography and the globally known personalities all can be identified (Jenes, 2012). Further influential factors can be the labour market, the international relations, the conflicts and the living standard, the quality of services, the relationship towards the natural surrounding and the environmental policy of the country.

Usually every country does marketing to gain the attention of tourists and investors. The experts of marketing recognized the importance of the country brand through its influence exercised on the national products (Made in Japan, Made in Germany, or Made in Hungary) in the 1960s. It has been followed by the scientific investigation of the country image from the viewpoint of marketing, from the 1980s on. The surveys eventually included the analysing of the country marketing activity parallel with the development of marketing aspects in order to support the deliberate image development of the country (Nadeau et al., 2008). From the 2000s the idea of the county branding has also been introduced with the efficiency analysis and the conscious branding techniques of the country as if it were a product.

## COUNTRY BRAND

The basic questions of the scientific investigation of the country brand include the theory of the consumer-based country brand equity (Keller, 1993), and the model of the adaptive character of the thought (Anderson, 1993). This model is derived from the cognitive psychology and according to it the information regarding the products and services appear in the memories of the consumers in a hierarchic order, thus making up hubs in a network. It means that associations are connected to the information. Consequently there must be associations linked to the information regarding countries as well. These are displayed in the form of a network in the minds of the tourists and investors, too. Since these associations have both directions and intensities they enter into interference with one another.

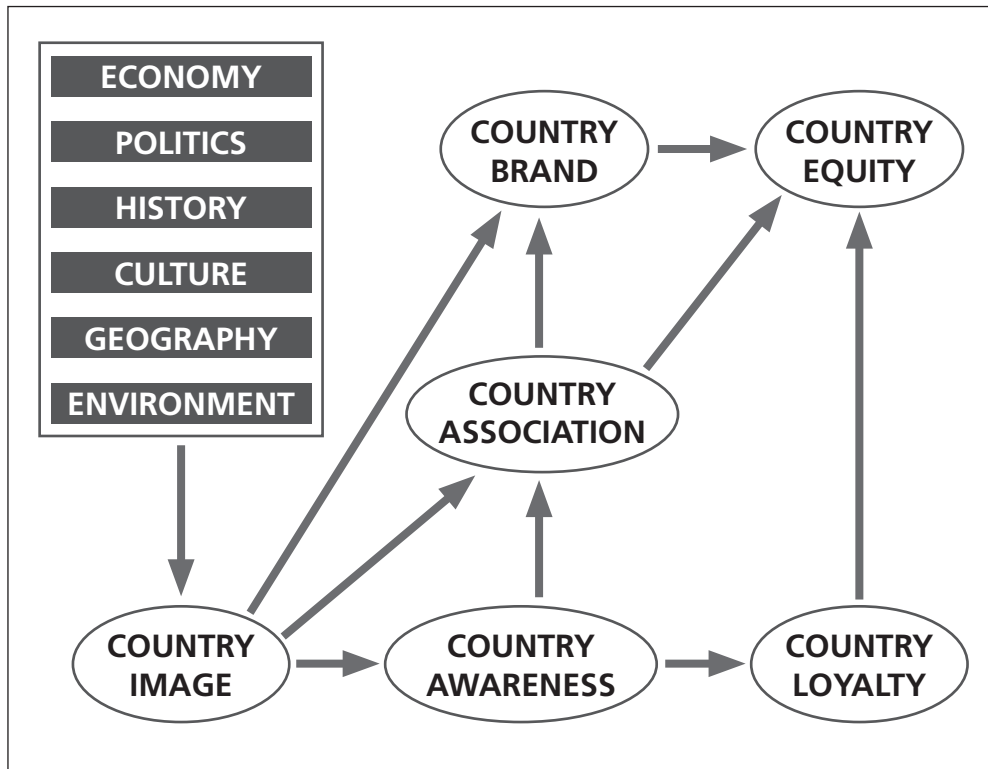
According to Jenes (2014) the model of the associative network memory is a good platform to interpret the cognition and description of the dimensions of the country brand equity, too. The application of this model brought about the theory of country equity which is the extension of the classical brand equity theories. The researchers

of the above field generally accept the country equity as an attribution of which the potential consumers think when hearing or reading the country name. Therefore the dimensions of country brand equity are the following: country awareness, country association, country loyalty.

The making of the country brand is a communication task. It can be embodied by a logo or slogan having been created from the country image appearing in the minds of the given country's population and of all the foreigners, providing it can be measured, assumed or interpreted at all.

During the course of country marketing it is the trust in its logo, slogan, brand or name that the potential buyer has to be convinced of. The buyers' target groups include the most important ones, first of all, the FDI investors, then the guest-workers, the foreign students, and the ill, seeking cures abroad, and finally the most effective advertising media target group, the tourists. Last, but not at all least, the local population of the country has to be convinced to trust in the country brand as a first step in national marketing even though it will not yield direct investment, or income. After all, no one else is going to believe in a country brand if the local population does not know, like or protect their country (Tózsá, 2014).

*Figure 1: Sources and connections of the country image, country brand and country equity*



*Source: Based on Jenes, 2014*

## SOURCES OF THE COUNTRY IMAGE

National sources of the country image include:

- 1) Economy (quality and the awareness of its products, reliability, economic and military power, labour market, social network and welfare);
- 2) Policy (foreign relations, democracy prevailing in its domestic policy, transparency of its economy, living standard, worldwide recognition of its politicians);
- 3) History (its role in world history, relations to neighbouring countries);
- 4) Culture (contribution to universal culture, worldwide recognition of pieces of fine art, literature, architecture, monuments, its artists, scientists, sportsmen, gastronomy and its tourist destinations);
- 5) Geography (landscape beauties, sights, geological, botanical values, fauna and national parks);
- 6) Environment (the level and effect of pollution, the quality of services, legal certainty regarding personal and property).

## COUNTRY AWARENESS, COUNTRY ASSOCIATION, COUNTRY LOYALTY

*Country awareness* does not only mean that consumers know the country, its name, but they are able to quote some brands of products from the country as well (Papadopoulos, 1993). Country awareness also involves the knowledge of certain facts or data that the potential consumers possess about the country, without ICT aids such as Internet, smart telephone, textbooks, and lexicons. This way the source of country awareness is the country image influencing country association and country loyalty respectively.

*Country association* answers such a thought association with which the country names can contribute to the devaluation or appreciation of certain products, brands, services, or sights to see in the minds of the potential consumers. Country association springs from the country awareness and it is the complexity of not only information and knowledge, but rather beliefs, subjective convictions, impressions permeated with emotions (Pappu and Quaster, 2010). In the course of country branding the communication specialists do not only use the country image, but also the country associations, providing they are expected to raise positive emotions in the consumers (who can be investors, tourists, guest-workers, students, patients and domestic population).

*Country loyalty* influences country equity and is based upon country awareness and belongs to those customers who repeatedly trust the country's products, to the investors who repeat their investment in a foreign country, and to the tourists, students, and patients who express their trust in the country by repeating their visits there. The manifestation of country loyalty in the case of domestic population is patriotism. Country loyalty exists as brand loyalty in marketing, and can be expressed towards a certain country (Pappu and Quaster, 2010).

*Country equity* is a complex parameter that is defined by the country brand designed by communication specialists, by the country association based on country

image and by the country awareness arising from subjective knowledge and emotions, and by the country loyalty (after Nadeau et al., 2008; Jenes, 2014). It is a collage of images constructed into hierarchic, associative network containing information, emotional impressions, maybe experiments and perhaps the official country brand, too. This collage is able to influence the decisions of the consumers (foreign investors, tourists, students, guest-workers, patients and domestic population) regarding a given country.

## COUNTRY BRANDING

Creating the country brand is the task for communication specialists who try to form it from the country image and associations, following the pattern of marketing products in business. The process of country branding was introduced into special literature by Simon Anholt (1998). With this he earned a similar worldwide professional reputation in urban marketing as Greg Ashworth did when he was the first in adopting the classical marketing tools and aspects to the place (1990), thus making ground for the professional field of urban marketing. It has to be noted, however, Anholt seems to interpret country image and country brand as some kind of synonym, since when describing image, he uses the expression brand and applies it as a logo from business marketing practice. In an innovative way he says country branding is nothing other than the possibility or more precisely impossibility of shaping country image.

In the age of globalisation every country intentionally or unintentionally becomes a seller in a global market place where it has to sell the trust in its own values, or if the leaders of the country do not feel like selling it, the trust in the country's values<sup>1</sup> will at any rate be given credit or not in the global marketplace. The consumers<sup>2</sup> deciding on whether to give credit to and trust in a country's brand or do this on the basis of minimal information and knowledge. This is the reason why the country image (together with the country association, brand, awareness and equity) does not contain only exact information and knowledge, but rather feelings, prejudices, sympathy, preconception with their interrelations ordered into a hierarchical network by the country association. In the global market of countries there are some 200 actors<sup>3</sup> each of whom is both a seller and a consumer.

Most countries try to apply logos and conduct branding communication. According to their philosophy their governments know the values of their countries, their scenic landscapes, their proper sites to invest, and their tourist destinations; however, they have to face the facts that the other countries are not aware of their values. Therefore they feel compelled to set up and open offices and agencies whose tasks include communication design, branding the country i.e. the PR and the promotion of the country. Anholt (2016) says and verifies it with research results that this kind of promotion with the exception of that of the tourist destination is quite useless and has no impact, since the country equity cannot be influenced by country branding no matter how much government money is put into it. In the global world of the Internet, country brand promotion towards the local population and the foreign consum-

ers can work only in the dictatorships, where the political power directing the branding can close down all the communication channels, but its own. But even in this case only the local population can be made to trust in and believe the country's image. The potential foreign consumers will react to such an image in two ways as the people do who are being coerced to believe in something: 1) they either do not pay attention to it, or 2) they reject it with collecting contradictory reasons. Anholt (2016) presents the examples of Hitler's Third Reich from history and that of North Korea now.

#### ANHOLT'S NATION BRAND INDEX

Governments, when they try to brand their countries (which equals the country image forming in Anholt's interpretation, too), they try to communicate with statistical data and facts what their country does and has. What is missing from this is what people think of it? And that is why this kind of country branding has no effect at all. Anholt (2007; 2011) has introduced a new method and a parameter with which he wanted to measure and rank the country brands and images. He created the *country brand index* with the *competitive identity* method. With this, relying only on the names of the countries as brands he has created the nations' rank list.

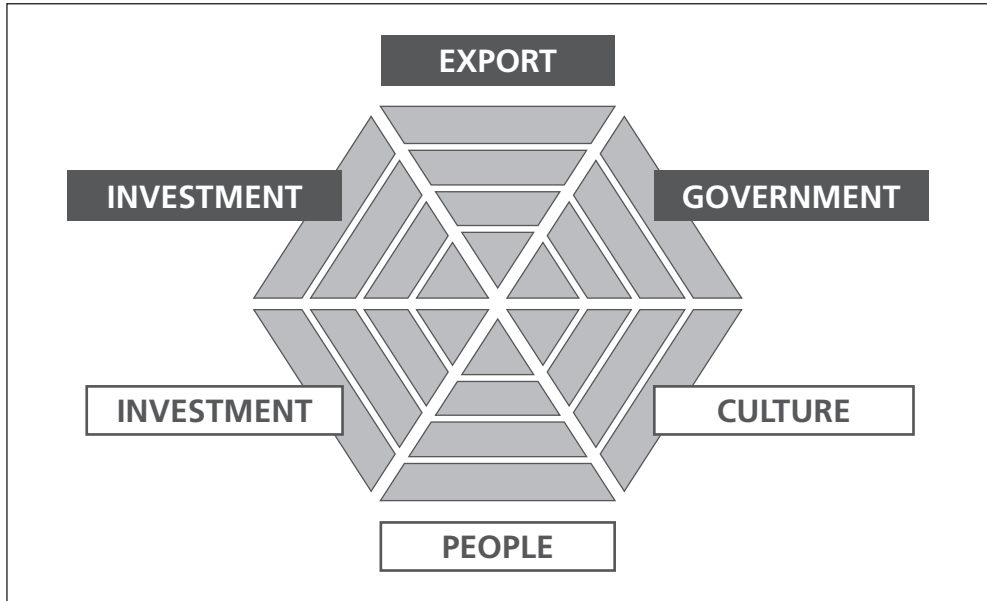
This nation brand rank index list has such an economic impact that according to the results of the Max Planck Institute one point improvement on this list induces 2% export growth of the given country (Anholt, 2016).

The basis of this nation index list is the competitive identity measurement that is the most extensive social science research. Since 2008 there have been 25 thousand enquiry sheets of 50 questions each, filled in and processed from 25 countries. The survey has been examining 50 countries that represents statistically 66% of the global population and 70% of the purchasing power parity. In the past 7 years it yielded 245 million data sequences to be processed.<sup>4</sup> Half of the questions of the enquiry sheets regard three "hard" parameters: the *export* (to measure the economic strength of the brand "Made in"), the *FDI* (Foreign Direct Investment), and the *reputation of the government* (from the aspects of democracy, transparency and environmental policy). Besides them there is a group of another three questions regarding the "soft" parameters. They are *tourism* (with the landscape and entertainment destinations of the country), *people* (the worldwide known personalities of a country, the immigrants and the Diasporas coming from there<sup>5</sup>), finally *culture* (including the cultural world heritage items, gastronomy, music and arts of the given countries).

The investigations of Anholt led to the recognition of an important fact that while the "hard" factors representing the economic power of a country are more or less known, the "soft" factors are usually unknown abroad which can lead to significant anomalies.<sup>6</sup> To detail why the lexical knowledge of people regarding universal history, literature, geography and art is so extremely low and why it is still declining may lead far. It cannot be explained by the shortcomings of schooling, but rather by the restructuring of knowledge. The smart phone, with which all the world's knowledge is in your hand or pocket, ranks lexical knowledge as something to be kept in the In-

ternet cloud instead of your own memory where it is useless. This leads to the loss of knowledge with emotional surplus, too, including country awareness and image, and in case of local population to the loss of patriotism as well (Tózsá, 2016).

*Figure 2: Anholt's country brand index*



*Note: See the strength of the “hard” factors (top) that are relatively rather known by the foreign consumers than the “soft” factors (bottom) that are less or not known by the majority. The strength of the factors can be displayed on a 0-5 scale hexagon diagram*

*Source: Anholt, 2016*

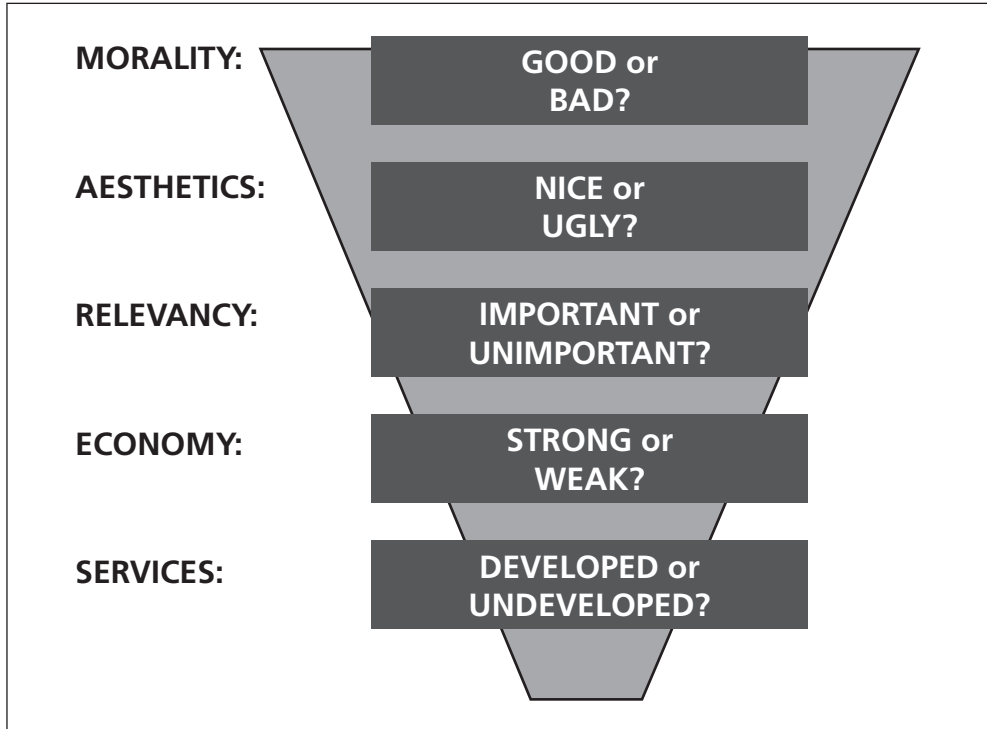
When analysing the data of competitive identity deciding the nation brand, Anholt came to the conclusion that though the country image (brand) is not constant, it changes very slowly. It has continually been built into people's minds since childhood and single events like e.g. the Volkswagen scandal in 2015 cannot at all rock people's confidence in a country brand, this time in the German trademarks, and they continue to believe in the good quality of German products, trusting them as if nothing has happened. Anholt's research team surveyed the responses regarding the “soft” factors, too. They discovered that when classifying national brand indexes in social, historic, cultural aspects, the mental level of a decisive segment of the world's population<sup>7</sup> answers with the knowledge of a seven year old child (Anholt, 2016).

Having taken into consideration the result of the analysis of the huge data set, Anholt's research team established a refined national brand indexing method with the simplest approach. What is a country like? To be able to answer this, see the approach below on the mental level of a seven year old child: 1) Is the country good or bad? It means it is dangerous or useful for the rest of the countries, and if it is reliable in in-



ternational relations. 2) Is the country's landscape pleasant, beautiful, or is it ugly? 3) Do I have anything to do with this country? It means if it is important or not significant for me for some reasons. 4) Is it strong, or is it weak, meaning rich or poor? 5) Does it have highly developed services, or not?

*Figure 3: Anholt's good country image*



*Note: Components of the country equity. The basis of the good country index, showing that the moral aspect is by high the most important in judging the country names (images, brands) positive or negative; is it good or bad?*

*Source: Based on Anholt, 2016*

### BE GOOD IF YOU CAN<sup>8</sup>

According to Anholt, the good country index, drawn from the country name as an image or brand, can manifest the country equity on the country association interpreted on the mental level of a seven year old child. It comes from the recognition that the moral aspect (good/bad) is the most significant factor in the country equity. Who do people love? The good one. Like in case of modern business marketing, the basic issue is not the praising of the product or service, but the survey of the market demand; in the course of country marketing it is not sufficient, or to put it simpler, with the exception of tourism it is totally useless to praise and expose the values of a country.

The moral choice between good and bad is manifested in the question: what does this country do in favour of the other countries?

Anholt's Good Country Index is calculated for 125 countries (Hungary ranks 61. while e.g. China 125.). Similarly to the country brand index it is also changing very slowly, and it totally neglects the fact how much is spent on country marketing activity (i.e. promoting its "hard" factors). One of the moral lessons of the good country index application and survey (Anholt, 2016) is e.g. Malaysia that has launched a very heavy country marketing campaign in 2014 and it did not result in any change of its rank in the list, and on the other hand, there was e.g. the Czech Republic which did not spend on country marketing in 2015 and stayed at the same rank in the list as previously. Egypt spent a lot on country marketing activity in 2015 and yet its position got worse in the list, like Italy which did not spend on marketing. Chile and South Korea, however, got into a better position in the good country index list in 2015, despite not having spent on country marketing campaigns in the previous year. What did they do? South Korea opened up new doors in approaching North Korea as a gesture, made Seoul a greener and more liveable city than it had been before, and increased its activities in the international aids and charity organisations. Chile launched its start-up programme through the import of the USA start-up companies.

What a country or government does to its local population belongs to domestic policy, and it will be known from the international press, if it is ostensive and irregular enough to rise the stimulus threshold of the international media. The major question is what a country or government does to support other countries and governments? This is what has to be communicated in the course of country branding. Inherently each government of each country is egoistic, when they send delegations to international forums, their main objective is always to reach the most favourable position usually at the expense of the others. The first ten ranks are occupied in Anholt's good country index list by the member states of the European Union.

International public opinion appreciates the Union membership, because in the Union each nation-state could convince itself to give up a part of its economic sovereignty for the sake of the so called common good.<sup>9</sup>

So what can a small country do if it wants to be "good"? Global common good can be embodied by such an activity that serves other countries as well, in trying to solve global problems. They can be the participation in trying to decrease the causes of *climate change*, the protection of *human rights*, the response towards *migration*, the overcoming of regional *epidemics*, the participation in giving international aids to countries stricken by natural *catastrophes*, preventing *nuclear danger*, etc. Obviously these problems are exceeding the capacity of even the strongest countries, they are too global. However, during the country marketing the participation is the fact that has to be stressed. In case of Hungary such activity is that of the president of the republic, János Áder who exercises a great international influence in fighting against the global warming.

The major issue in achieving a favourable rank in the good country index list is what a given country has done in protecting global environment? Or even more pre-

cisely: what this country has done for us? If we now think of Hungary, the question is what Hungary has done for the other European countries? Today it is no use to mention historical milestone battles like the one in 1241 when the Hungarian king sacrificed his kingdom to stop the Mongolian invasion threatening Europe, or the battle in 1456 when Hungary stopped the Ottoman Turkish attack for 70 years at today's Beograd. Between 1526 and 1697 the Hungarian Kingdom used up all its resources including independence and area in order to protect the Christian Europe against the Ottoman Turkish westward expansion.<sup>10</sup>

Hungarian nation as it can be seen from its history is an extremely self-defeating one. The first two milestone battles in 1241 and later in 1526 were lost because of the infighting between the kings and the aristocracy, which has been repeatedly present in Hungarian politics up to now. It is something that might be explained only by supernatural causes like the Turanian Curse.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 4: "Hungary" in some Eurasian languages<sup>12</sup>



Source: Edited by the author

The names *magyar* (Hungarian) and *Magyarország* (Hungary) as our perception of brand names, north and west of the country is dominantly derived from the word "Hun", with the exception of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the neighborhood. To the south and east of Hungary, its name is usually formed with the words "Ung" or "Veng" and the form of the Hungarians' original, qualified name, the "Magyar" also appears as a prefix. The pejorative sound of the word "Hun" can be understood in West, North, South and Central Europe and all over the world where the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French and English who do identify the Hungarians with the Huns, established colonies. In these regions Hungary as a country brand is at a competitive disadvantage because of the gaps in regional knowledge and the negative emotions associated to the word "Hun" (barbarian).<sup>14</sup> In addition, the Hun-Hungarian (*Magyar*) association seems to be indelible even in the Hungarian social consciousness as it is supported by many historical beliefs and legends.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1: Strategic table of the Hungarian country branding related to Anholt's competitive identity<sup>13</sup>

| Hun- (negative)   | Ung-   | Veng-  | Magyar- (positive)   |
|---|--|--|--|
| Albanian,<br><b>Arab</b> ,<br>Armenian,<br>Dutch,<br><b>English</b> ,<br><b>French</b> ,<br>Greek,<br><b>Hebrew</b> ,<br>Latin (scientific),<br><b>Portuguese</b> ,<br><b>Spanish</b> | Bulgarian,<br>Danish,<br>Estonian,<br>Finnish,<br>Georgian,<br><b>German</b> ,<br>Irish,<br><b>Italian</b> ,<br>Latvian,<br>Macedonian,<br>Norwegian,<br><i>Romanian</i> ,<br>Swedish,<br><b>Ukrainian</b> | Belarus,<br>Kyrgyz,<br>Lithuanian,<br><b>Polish</b> ,<br><b>Russian</b> ,<br>Turkmen | Azeri,<br><i>Croatian</i> ,<br>Czech,<br>Kazakh,<br>Kurdish,<br>Mongolian,<br><b>Persian</b> ,<br><i>Serbian</i> ,<br><i>Slovakian</i> ,<br><i>Slovenian</i> ,<br>Tajik,<br>Tartar,<br><b>Turkish</b> ,<br>Uzbek |

Note: Meaning of italics: language of a neighbouring country; bold: ≥ 40 million speakers, italics and bold: both

Source: Edited by the author

The purpose of the official Hungarian nation branding could be the winning of the public sympathy of the two most influential powers, Germany with some 80, and Russia with some 150 million populations. Also, Turkey<sup>16</sup> and Iran (Persia) also with some 80 million inhabitants respectively could be desirable partners in improving Hungarian nation brand. In doing so, Hungarians could also rely on the 40 million Polish nation<sup>17</sup> alone among the peoples of Europe.

In order to improve Hungary's good country index, the government ought not to advertise and promote the landscape beauties, the cultural heritage, events and festivals, since Anholt's findings pointed out their unnecessary nature. This activity has to be left in charge of the tourist agencies and the government bodies responsible for tourism. Hungarian government ought to communicate first of all in German, Russian, Italian, Polish, Turkish and Persian speaking areas what Hungary does for them!

In 2013 in Malmö (Sweden), in the Eurovision Song Contest a song titled "My Dear" (sung in Hungarian) reached No. 10, thanks to Germany, the weight of the German voters alone, who dedicated their score to the "Dear Hungary". What Hungarian image elements motivate the sympathy of the new age German public? Before the political change of the regime in 1989, Hungary provided a pleasant and cheap meeting place at the *Plattensee*, or Lake Balaton for the German families coming from the two politically divided German countries in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Tearing down the "Iron Curtain" separating the communist countries from the European democracies was also a Hungarian initiation in 1989 which directly led to the German reunion.<sup>18</sup> As it can already be seen, the Hungarian defensive role played in the so called

migrant crises having started in 2015, will further support the sympathy of the average German citizens towards Hungary and the Hungarian government, no matter what the official German policy declares.<sup>19</sup> All these will improve the Hungarian image in the German social consciousness as that of a country which knows the only reasonable way to protect Europe and first of all Germany, the main destination of the African and Asian migrants. Hungarians almost stand alone backed only by the Polish, Czechs and Slovaks in trying to maintain the Schengen border of the EU and Germany. The Hungarian measures are in sharp contrast with the helpless migrant management of the official EU. Therefore the German public might get over the negative “Hun” association, thus improving the Hungarian country brand in Germany.

Russia, trying to regain its great power position in the global geopolitical game, got into contradiction with the USA once again, after the Cold War. As a consequence of the NATO expansion in the Baltic region, the Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea were inevitable and scheduled responses to occur. Hungary also got into a new geostrategic position and it is not only about the country brand, but about a real policy choice: whom to do good for: the Russians or the Ukrainians? Ukraine is a neighbouring country with a Hungarian minority living in its Trans-Carpathian region. It is a huge country with a 40 million population and it offers Hungary a proximate and large market. Russia is a global power, the world’s largest country and richest in natural resources, which if joined forces with China along the Eurasian New Silk Road project implementation, can be a worthy challenger to the USA (Bernek, 2016). The most feasible European gateway of the north continental New Silk Road (the One Belt, One Road Chinese project) is offered by Hungary.

According to the country association there are three countries among the large and strategically very important ones which can be good alliances in improving Hungary’s image. One is the “ancient enemy” and a brother nation at the same time, Turkey. The other is Iran (Persia) the cradle of European civilization, and the third is the old friend, Poland. All three countries have special global geo-strategic positions from the viewpoint of the main geopolitical chess master, the USA. The chess master intends to move the Polish and the Turks to restrain and isolate Russia in Europe, while the Persians are meant to do the same regarding India and China (Friedman, 2016).

Obviously Hungary, with its Euro-Atlantic commitment in geopolitical sense cannot perform a “good country” role towards Russians and Ukrainians at the same time or to the Turkish and the Russians simultaneously. In these countries the Hungarian appreciation of their history and cultural values ought to be communicated. In order to achieve and strengthen the good country image or brand, Hungary has to be present in the destination countries, in their nation state level environmental events, in cases of emergency, natural disasters, rescue or relief actions (no matter how symbolic) Hungary’s participation, care support and help have to be communicated and stressed. In the same way the expression of solidarity during the concrete or symbolic support has to be carefully communicated. It is not about only *doing good*, but *doing well*.

“GOOD AND WELL”  
TO STRENGTHEN THE HUNGARIAN COUNTRY EQUITY

In summary, harmonizing with the current geopolitical situation, the Hungarian government ought to pay attention to the communication of the activities below in order to enhance the good country image and brand in the primary destination countries (the “important” ones and the ones with “Magyar” prefixes).

*Table 2: Fields and measures to be taken to strengthen Hungarian country equity abroad*

| <b>Event</b>  | <b>Activity to communicate</b>  |
|---|---|
| Forums, events related to global climate change   | High level participation, holding speeches, organising the events, or sections of the events  |
| Forums, events, related to global pollution   |   |
| Forums, events related to regional environmental problems                                 |   |
| Supporting green and liveable human environment   | Educational publishing and online dissemination of works, pieces of arts                      |
| The protection of European culture  |   |
| Regional epidemics  | Medical aid, rescue team, food aiding even if it is only symbolic                             |
| Natural disaster, catastrophe (earthquake, tsunami, floods, volcanic eruptions, droughts) |   |
| Migration, illegal migration  | Effective protection of the Schengen border, border control contribution to transit countries |
| Civil war   | Geopolitical situation-dependent military assistance, even if it is symbolic                  |
| Strengthening cultural links  | Maintaining historical, cultural relations abroad, commemorations, participation in events    |
| Strengthening the soft factors (human, tourism, culture)                                  | Organising Hungarian Days   |
| European existence. Sustainability of the nation state diversity in the field of culture  | Online publication of games and videos which will strengthen the European system of values    |

*Source: Edited by the author*

Due to its size and economic virtue, Hungary cannot incur any significant great power role in the various aiding measures, therefore the focus ought to be directed not on the volume of assistance delivery, but on a professional way of communicating its involvement in the international aiding activity. Thus as many people will learn about it as possible, not only in the recipient country but in the world public opinion.

*Table 3: Priority of the country destinations to do good and well*

| <b>Priority order to improve country equity</b> |                                |                                  |                             |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>1. Group<br/>("important")</b>               | <b>2. Group<br/>("Magyar")</b> | <b>3. Group<br/>("Ung/Veng")</b> | <b>4. Group<br/>("Hun")</b> | <b>5. Group<br/>("remote")</b> |
| Germany   | Croatia                        | Romania                          | USA                         | China                          |
| Ukraine   | Serbia                         | Austria                          | Great-Britain               | Japan                          |
| Poland  | Slovakia                       | Bulgaria                         | France                      | South-Korea                    |
| Russia  | Slovenia                       | Macedonia                        | Spain                       |                                |
| Turkey  | Czech Rep.                     | Switzerland                      | Portugal                    | India                          |
| Italy   | Montenegro                     | Ireland                          | Netherlands                 | Brasilia                       |
| Iran (Persia)                                   | Bosnia Herzegovina             | Finland                          | Belgium                     | Indonesia                      |
|   | Azerbaijan                     | Sweden                           | Israel                      | Mexico                         |
|   | Kazakhstan                     | Norway                           | Greece                      | etc.                           |
|   | Tajikistan                     | Denmark                          | Albania                     |                                |
|   | Uzbekistan                     | Georgia                          | Armenia                     |                                |
|   | Mongolia                       | Lithuania                        |                             |                                |
|   |                                | Latvia                           |                             |                                |
|   |                                | Estonia                          |                             |                                |
|   |                                | Belarus                          |                             |                                |
|   |                                | Moldavia                         |                             |                                |
|   |                                | Kyrgyzstan                       |                             |                                |
|   |                                | Turkmenistan                     |                             |                                |

*Source: Edited by the author*

In the first group of the priority table, the “important” countries are the ones with at least 40 million inhabitants that do not use in their Hungarian country brand the “Hun” prefix responsible for the most pejorative emotional country association, and such powers from Asia Minor and the Middle East who use the friendlier “Magyar” prefix. Owing to the geopolitical role of Hungary leading to the German Reunion, the Hungarian country brand did improve in Germany. In the second group there are countries applying names to Hungary derived from the “Magyar” and where the Hungarian country name value and equity can be maintained or improved with relatively small investment.<sup>20</sup> In the third group there are the nations using the “Ung” and “Veng” prefixes, and where the Hungarian country image and brand have a good chance to improve. The fourth group including most of the strong countries, there is a strong social consciousness of either the “Hun/barbarian,” or the “Hun/hunger” associations. With them history has shown that where they find it appropriate, like the French political leaders, they easily sacrifice Hungarians when it serves their interests. It was the case many times during the 17th-19th centuries when the Hungarian political leaders of the freedom fights against the Austrian Empire were deceived and misled all the time by the French politicians. And in 1920 France, Britain and the USA in the Peace Treaty of Versailles ordered two thirds of the one thousand year old Hungarian Kingdom to be given to the neighbouring countries, just to isolate Germany from the Balkan and East European expansion, by destroying the strongest link of the Austro-



Hungarian Monarchy. With millions of Hungarians finding themselves abroad as national minorities in today's Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine, the French and the British were assured that the region of the Carpathian Basin would never be united again for more than a century. And there would be no chance to revive the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the eastward geostrategic bridgehead of the Germans.

The fifth group contains the remote or overseas countries among which the ones listed, and especially China, Korea and Japan may have significant effect in forming global public opinion as well, regarding the country brand of Hungary. In most of the African, American, and Asian countries the legacy of the "Hun" prefix version prevails because it was simply inherited from their former English, French, Spanish, Portuguese or Dutch speaking colonialists. In case of some other "remote" countries the Hungarian country branding may rely on the effective assistance of the many communities of the Hungarian emigrants and their descendants like e.g. in the USA, Canada, Argentina and Australia.

Finally it has to be noted that unfortunately, perhaps as a consequence of the previously mentioned Turanian Curse, the current Hungarian political opposition always complicates the job of the current Hungarian government in trying to improve the Hungarian country brand. They are ready to sink the government vessel, even if they themselves sink with it. They prefer being captains on the life raft to being sailors in the country's boat. In early 2017 e.g. the opposition initiated a referendum against the organisation of the 2024 Olympic Games for which Budapest would have had quite good chances. Also, the misconduct procedures launched by the EU against Hungary are always backed by the EU representatives of the current Hungarian opposition. There is hardly another nation in the world the pro-government and opposition representatives of which would not be able to cooperate in case an issue of national importance. Hungarian nation, however, despite being extraordinarily talented, is such. *Nil novi sub sole*, the behaviour related to this Latin proverb can be traced back in history. In the 13th century most of the Hungarian barons wanted their wealth confiscating king to be defeated rather than to march to war with him, even though they themselves were slaughtered later by the grandchild of Genghis Khan, the Mongol. When Suleiman the great Ottoman-Turkish conqueror attacked Hungary in the 16th century, a major war lord deliberately missed the battle hoping that the reigning king would fall and he himself could be the new king with Turkish support. This self-destructive disregard can be detected in the 21st century as well in the EU Parliament, making the Hungarian good country brand building rather difficult. The European public has to face the question: how much good can this country do for others when it cannot do good, even itself?

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Resources, products, history, culture, services etc.
- <sup>2</sup> Investors, shoppers, tourists, guest-workers, international students, the ill seeking healing – and the local population.
- <sup>3</sup> The number of countries is around 200, but the exact number depends on various factors like whether the country is a de jure independent area, whether it is recognized by the UNO, whether it is a colony,



an oversea dependency or protectorate, or the country is a *de facto* independent area, not recognized by the UNO only by certain other countries, but operating as a state seceded from another country with its own administration.

- <sup>4</sup> It can be interpreted as the application of big data in social surveys, the largest scale ever conducted.
- <sup>5</sup> Interestingly the more immigrants or guest-workers come from a country, the larger the Diaspora is, the country's image and equity is getting worse in the destination country, due to the following message generated in people's mind: "If so many people have to leave their country, that country cannot be a good place."
- <sup>6</sup> E.g. in the field of culture people place the USA with some 300 year history before Iran (Persia) the cradle of human civilization with a history looking back to some 5000 years
- <sup>7</sup> The 25 countries included in the survey stand for 70% of the world's PPP.
- <sup>8</sup> The forewarning of Saint Philip of Neri: "*State buoni, se potete.*"
- <sup>9</sup> No one has ever recorded the economic loss Hungary suffered during the time of the preparation for the EU accession, following the change of the political regime in 1989. E.g. the Hungarian aluminium industry, apple orchards, agriculture, food industry used to be among the world's leading producers, but when the socialist economic borders had to be opened to market economy, all Hungarian trades went bankrupt, industrial factories, agricultural cooperatives all were privatised, sold and then closed down. The country had to pay a very high price accompanied with massive unemployment, inflation and decline in living standard, in order to be able to join the EU's market economy. The beneficiaries of these losses were the economies of the strongest European Union member states, via gaining new markets.
- <sup>10</sup> Hungarian mediaeval poets like Bálint Balassi referred to Hungary as the "Patria wearing the shield of Christianity and a sword painted with the blood of the enemy".
- <sup>11</sup> The Turanian Plain lies between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea on the eastern edge of the European continent. This is the original homeland of the Hungarians, the Magyars, known as Great Hungary, or *Magna Hungaria*, in Latin. Today it is the territory of Bashkiria and the Tartar Republic of the Russian Federation. The majority of the *Magyar* (Hungarian) tribes wandered towards the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea in today's Ukraine, then in a few hundred years they arrived in the Carpathian Basin (in 895 AD) where in 1000 AD they were affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church and Christianity, known as the "new faith." However, some of the *Magyar* tribes had dwelled in the Turanian region until 1240, the Mongolian or Tartar invasion of East Europe. The Turanian priests or shamans of the ancient Hungarian faith put a curse on the Magyars having left their native land, saying "people leaving their homeland behind will be left by their gods, and their reward is a constant dissension and internecine fight". This is the essence of the Turanian Curse that seems to have struck Hungarians and is still displayed even in the EU Parliament among Hungarian representatives belonging to different parties; they take one another as the worst enemies sometimes completely neglecting the real interest of the Hungarian nation.
- <sup>12</sup> The distribution of the names meaning Hungary in Europe and in the Middle East, showing the ones who use the "Hun" forms in grey, and the ones using the 'Magyar' forms in black. The neighbouring nations (with the exception of the Austrians and the Romanians) and the nations in Asia Minor, the Middle East and Middle Asia use the "Magyar" forms. The majority of the West, North and South European nations apply the pejorative "Hun" formative, which generates a pejorative country association in their social consciousness, unfortunately.
- <sup>13</sup> Regions and nations with English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew and Arabic native speakers are just "crumbs of comfort" from the viewpoint of Hungarian country marketing attempts. In German, Ukrainian, Italian, Russian and Polish languages the "Hun" is not directly present, therefore the Hungarian chances of the country branding might be better and are worth strengthening the good country image. Paradoxically the country brand sounds best among the native speakers of the ancient enemy, the Turkish, and in the source of the European or Western culture, the ancient Persia (Iran). They could be the best partners in creating the good country brand for Hungary.
- <sup>14</sup> On the one hand, the present writer was talking with an American woman teaching English in Hungary a few years ago, and she remarked she did not understand why the name Attila was so popular with the Hungarians. It was something, she added, as if someone was named Satan in the States. Well, indeed if

we consider the great Hun war lord having devastated a good part of today's West Europe, he cannot be expected to retain a positive image in the social memory of the Western civilization. On the other hand the positive image of Attila is present in the Hungarian collective memory since the Reform Age (early 19th century) when the Hungarians fought for their economic independence from the House of Austria, the Hungarian national literature and arts used the image of the world conqueror Hun over-king (referring to him as the forefather of the Hungarians) to awaken the national pride and consciousness of the Hungarians.

<sup>15</sup> The present writer held an introductory lecture in 2006 to a Swiss group of university students about Hungary, on the bank of the River Danube in Budapest the capital city of Hungary. He happened to mention that the name of the country in Hungarian is not Hungary, but *Magyar* country. The Swiss were curious to know if the Hungarians had not been the descendents of the Huns. 'Of course, not' was the answer 'the Huns had dwelled in the Carpathian Basin for only 50 years in the middle of the 5th century AD, while the *Magyars* arrived here almost 5 hundred years later, in the 10th century, so the Hungarians have nothing to do with Attila's Huns.' Then the present writer pointed at the entrance of the big cave chapel in the side of a huge block of rock, the Gellért Hill on the other side of the Danube: "See that cave up the hill there? That lent its name to Budapest, the Hungarian capital, because Pest means cave in old Hungarian language." It was the moment when one of the Swiss students asked: 'And what does Buda mean, professor?' She must have known that the Hun Attila's twin brother's name was Buda. So the Hungarians themselves could not get rid of the Hun heritage even if they wanted to, it is present not only in the name of their country in many languages, but in the name of their capital city, too.

<sup>16</sup> Since Hungarian language does not belong to the Indo-European language family, but to the Ural- Altaic language family, among the closest relatives of the Hungarians there are the Turkish. During the 14th-17th centuries there had been a constant hostility, a brother-war between the two related nations who had been socialized in two totally different religious cultures and civilizations.

<sup>17</sup> *Polak, Wegier, dwa bratanki, i do szabli, i do szklanki* (Polish and Hungarian are two good friends who fight and drink wine together). The mutual sympathy of the two nations dates back to the times when the Hungarian kingdom was founded. The first Hungarian king's (Saint Stephen's) sister, Judith, was married to the Polish king and her son Bezprym lended his name to the Hungarian town of the queens: Veszprém. Several of the first Hungarian kings were born in Poland. A Hungarian princess, Saint Kuni-gunda of Poland founded the famous salt mines at Wieliczka, Poland. Louis the Great used to be a common king of the Hungarians and Polish ruling the largest kingdom in Europe of the time. His daughter Hedvig was recognized as the reigning queen of Poland. The Polish Jagello House gave Hungarian kings as well. Due to his successful wars against the Russians, István Báthory, the Hungarian Transylvanian prince had also been the most popular and prestigious Polish king. During the two world wars the Hungarian and the Polish nations could maintain mutual solidarity.

<sup>18</sup> As it is recalled, on August 18, 1989, there was a so called Pan-European Picnic organised in Hungary in the close vicinity of the Austrian border and the impermeable "Iron Curtain". With the intercession of Gyula Horn the then foreign minister of Hungary it became possible to cross the border for a short time, even without a passport. The only condition was riding a bicycle. At that time in the heat of the summer, there were several thousand East-German tourists holidaying mainly at the Lake Balaton and when they learnt about this picnic, some 600 hundred of them drove to the border, curious to know if it is really possible to cross the "Iron Curtain" without being shot dead. All of them got across the border, riding bicycles and leaving their cars behind. In the communist times in East Germany the most popular, cheap and widespread car make used to be the Trabant, the "Paper Volkswagen," the only treasure of the East German families. It was the time when a new saying was born resembling the famous lines from Shakespeare's Richard III going like "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!" and it went like "A bicycle, a bicycle, my Trabant for a bicycle!" About a month later on September 11, the Hungarians opened the Austrian border in front of many thousands East Germans to go to West Germany via Austria. This was the most important Hungarian image enhancement action in German social consciousness, since another nation did them good, not only helped, but initiated the fall of the communist East Germany and the German Reunion.

- <sup>19</sup> The EU leaders' pro-acceptance attitude to migration crisis can hardly be verified, since it is the European civilization to be compromised on the long run. The radical implications of the democracy export named Arabic Spring generated by economic drives of the USA, destroyed the guarding dictatorial forces of the African (in Libya) and Asian (in Syria) gateways of the European Union (and its engine, Germany). Accidentally it was 2015, when the total GDP of the 28 EU countries exceeded that of the USA. The original American aim of the mass of migrants may have been to slow down the fast developing German economy. However, the German and Union political leaders may look upon this crisis as a tool to enforce a stronger European Union integration against the will of the minor nation states. Thus at the expense of receiving a few million migrants, a common EU military and foreign policy can be achieved with German hegemony. This could be a way to reverse the American "weapon" deployed against Germany, creating the United States of Europe. In this situation the minor nation states, rightly anxious about their own and the European culture, are the "bad guys," but only in the eyes of the political chess players. The average German, French, English, or Italian citizen, who votes for the good country index, agrees with the Hungarians. See the Brexit in Europe, the Catalonian crisis, or the triumph of Donald Trump in the USA and the political strengthening of the right wing in Austria at the end of 2017!
- <sup>20</sup> Notice: in case of the Slovaks having been seeking their national identity on government level since 1993 the "Madarsko" as a country brand rather has a more oppressive and pejorative meaning than friendly. Similarly, the Serbian "Madarska" bears the dark and bloody heritage of the Serbian-Hungarian relations all throughout the 16th-20th centuries. In the neighbouring countries like Slovakia, Serbia and first of all Romania, the still existing Hungarian national minorities can contribute to the formation of a better country brand.

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## *István Tózsá: Hungarian Country Equity*

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