

## **RESULTS OF LOCAL ELECTIONS IN HARGHITA COUNTY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2020**

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**Abstract:** The results of the local elections in Harghita County, 27th September 2020. This study aims to faithfully depict the territorial distribution of the electoral decisions taken by the inhabitants of Harghita County at the local elections held on 27th September 2020. Based on official statistical data from the Central Electoral Office (<https://locale2020.bec.ro/rezultate>), the voting for mayors, local and county councilors, as well as president of Harghita County Council was thoroughly examined. 67 mayors were elected in the 21st Electoral District – Harghita County, their political affiliation being as follows: DUHR (48), SDP (7), HAT (5), IC (5), FHP (1) and NLP (1). Of the 835 local councilor seats, most were won by DUHR (570), followed by HAT (138), SDP (49), NLP (34), FHP (14), CI (13), PMP (8), SRU-LUSP (3), PRO ROMÂNIA (2), while the Magyar Civic Party, National Unity Block, Humanist Power Party (Social-Liberal) and the Liberal and Democrat Alliance won a single seat each. Harghita County Council is comprised of 30 county councilors (with one less seat than in the 2016-2020 legislature), 19 being DUHR members, 4 HAT, 3 SDP, 2 FHP and 2 NLP. Borboly Csaba, the DUHR candidate, received a total of 69 822 votes (64.54% of the votes), thus winning his fourth term as president of Harghita County Council.

**Key words:** mayors, local councilors, county councillors, UDMR

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## INTRODUCTION

Initially, the local elections in the 2020-2024 mandate were scheduled to take place on June 28, 2020, but, considering the negative consequences generated by the epidemiological context of COVID-19, the Romanian government decided to postpone them, adopting a draft law (Law No. 84 of June 17, 2020), whereby the current mandates of the mayors, local and county councils, respectively of the presidents of county councils, are to be extended until November 1, 2020.

Meanwhile, the Romanian parliament adopted Law No. 135 of July 16, 2020, by which it was established that the date of the elections for local public administration authorities in 2020 will be held on Sunday, September 27, 2020.

To enter the electoral competition, political parties and candidates had to present a list of supporters (minimum 1% of the total number of voters registered in the Electoral Register and in the complementary electoral lists of the constituency for which they are running). According to Art. 3 of Law 84 of June 17, 2020, the minimum number of supporters required to submit candidacies has been reduced by half (50 signatures for municipalities, respectively no less than 250 signatures in the case of second-class urban settlements). Also, here we must mention the fact that a draft law was submitted that provided for the election of mayors in two voting rounds, but it was rejected in the Romanian Senate plenary. Therefore, the election of the mayors was done through a single round of voting, except for runoff situations, the only difference being the return to direct voting by the electorate for the president of the county council.

As in 2016, the Permanent Electoral Authority, with the support of the Special Telecommunications Service, ensured the real-time storage of the database generated by the IT System for monitoring attendance at the polls and preventing illegal voting, offering the possibility of online tracking line, in real time, of the situation of the presence of voters at the polls, and later, the centralization of the data from the minutes regarding the recording of the voting results.

In Electoral Constituency No. 21 – Harghita County, made up of 67 electoral constituencies, 291 polling stations were demarcated (one station more than in 2016). By centralizing the list of those registered in the electoral race regarding the local elections in this county, a number of 2,547 final candidacies resulted, of which 147 candidates were registered for the mayoral mandate, 41 in urban (with a maximum of 8 candidates in the adjudication the position of mayor in the case of Toplița Municipality) and 106 in rural areas (with a maximum of 5 candidates in the case of Subcetate commune). We note that in 28 of the 58 municipalities belonging to the county, there was only one competitor for the position of mayor, in all cases he represented UDMR (Avrămești, Brădești, Corund, Cozmeni, Dănești, Dârjiu, Dealu, Ditrău, Joseni, Lunca de Jos, Merești, Ocland, Plăiesii de Jos, Porumbeni, Racu, Remetea, Săcel, Sâncrăieni, Sândominic, Sânmartin, Sânsimion, Sântimbru, Satu Mare, Siculeni, Tomești, Tușnad, Vârșag and Zetea).

For local councils, the number of candidates was 2,190, of which 68.5% belong to the main parties with ethnic Hungarian candidates (UDMR, 979 candidates and AMT – Hungarian Alliance from Transylvania, 522 candidates), while the Romanian parties barely exceed the 20% threshold (PNL, 150 candidates; PSD, 141; PMP, 115; PRO ROMÂNIA, 56; USR, 46), adding to these

the 11 candidacies of the Phralipe Party of the Roma from Secuieni commune. For the County Council, 202 candidacies were submitted, the most belonging to UDMR and AMT (with 38 each), followed by PSD (34), PMP (30), PRO ROMANIA (18), PNL and USR-PLUS (15 each) and POL (14). Unlike the previous legislature, when the presidents of the county councils were appointed by the secret vote of the county councilors, the eight candidates belonging to the parties PNL, PSD, UDMR, PMP, PRO ROMANIA, POL, AMT and USR-PLUS this time were elected by the vote directly of the voters.

At the level of Electoral Constituency No. 21 – Harghita County, the total number of voters registered on the permanent and complementary lists in the 67 electoral constituencies is 270,315 people, of which 113,502 were present at the polls (41.98%). Following the situation of voters by gender, out of the total of 113,502 voters, 58,526 are women, and 54,976 are men, the majority coming from rural areas (59.25%, 67,257 people), and the remaining 40.75% (46,245 people) are urban voters, the most numerous belonging to the 45-64 age group (20,927 men and 21,972 women).

Also, here we recall the fact that the total number of valid votes cast for the position of mayor was 109,514, to which 3,977 invalid votes are added. For the local councils, the total number of valid votes cast was 107,877, and that of invalid votes 5,613. The total valid votes cast for the county council was 105,199 and 8,301 invalid votes. For county council president, the total number of valid votes cast was 108,176, and that of invalid votes was 5,326.

From a methodological point of view, regarding the issue of previous research aimed at the electoral behavior in the local elections in Transylvania, a series of articles and in-depth studies published in the geographical literature were consulted (Pop & Bodocan, 1991; Pop, 1992; Pop, 1997; Pop, 2001; Pop & Bodocan, 2009; Tofan, 2016). To understand the aspects related to the regulations regarding the organization and conduct of this type of electoral "examination", a series of legislative documents issued by the Permanent Electoral Authority and the Central Electoral Bureau were consulted.

#### **DISTRIBUTION OF MAYORS AND LOCAL COUNCILORS, BY POLITICAL PARTIES**

According to the official results provided by the Central Electoral Bureau for the election of local public administration authorities on September 27, 2020, through the online database <https://locale2020.bec.ro/rezultate>, Harghita county, as usual, recorded a lower turnout the average calculated at the national level (46.62%), so that by 2100 hours in this administrative-territorial unit, 41.98% of the total of 270,315 voters included in the electoral lists from the electoral constituencies of the county had expressed their choice by voting. According to what was shown previously, this territorial entity, together with Bacău, Braşov, Brăila, Covasna, Galaţi, Iaşi, Vaslui and the Municipality of Bucharest, is included in the category of counties with the lowest voting participation.

The number of valid votes cast for the position of mayor was 109,514, of which the Hungarian Democratic Union from Romania obtained 60,892 votes (55.6% in the constituency and 71.6% of mandates), the Hungarian Alliance from Transylvania, resulting from the merger between The Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (PPMT) and the Hungarian Civic Party (PCM), obtained 16,666 votes (15.21% and 7.5% of seats), the Free People's Party, 9,148 votes (8.35% and 1.5% of seats), Independent Candidate , 9,015 votes (8.23% and

7.5% of mandates), Social Democratic Party, 6,225 votes (5.68% and 10.40% of mandates), National Liberal Party, 4,344 votes (3.96% and 1.5% of mandates), Movement Party Popular, 1 157 votes (1.05%), Union Save Romania Alliance-Liberty, Unity and Solitude Party, 807 votes (0.73%), Hungarian Civic Party, 584 votes (0.53%), Pro Romania Party, 270 votes (0.24%) , the Social Unity Party of Romania, 163 votes (0.14%), the National Unity Bloc, 123 votes (0.11%), the Hope and Will Party – Reménység és akarát Pártja, 84 votes (0.07%) and the Phralipe Party of the Roma, 36 votes (0.03%).

**Table 1.** Valid votes cast and mandates by party at the Local Elections, Harghita county, September 2020  
Source: Central Electoral Office

Political party	Voturi		Mandates	%
	No.	% in county		
UDMR	60892	55.60	48	71.6
PSD	6225	5.68	7 (Toplița, Corbu, Gălăuțaș, Sărmaș, Subcetate, Tulgheș, Voșlăbeni)	10.4
AMT	16666	15.21	5 (Cristuru Secuiesc, Vlăhița, Căpâlnița, Ciceu, Suseni)	7.5
CI	9015	8.23	5 (Lăzarea, Tușnad, Bălan, Lucta, Merești)	7.5
POL	9148	8.35	1 (Odorheiu Secuiesc)	1.5
PNL	4344	3.96	1 (Bilbor)	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>106290</b>	<b>97.03</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100,0</b>

UDMR = Hungarian Democratic Union from Romania; PSD = Social Democratic Party; AMT = Hungarian Alliance from Transylvania; CI = Independent Candidate; POL = Party of Free People; PNL = National Liberal Party

As in the case of the 2016 Local Elections, the Hungarian electorate decided that the largest number of mayoral mandates would be obtained by the UDMR, with 48 mandates (71.6%), followed at a great distance by the PSD, with 7 mandates (10.4%), then AMT and CI, five mandates each (7.5%), respectively PNL and POL, one mandate each (1.5%).

If we analyze the structure of mandates at the level of the two residential areas, at the level of the nine urban settlements (13.43% of the mandates from the total of 45,061 votes validly cast), three come from the UDMR: Miercurea-Ciuc (73.7%, 10,940 total votes cast), mandate awarded by the former deputy, Attila Korodi, who served as Minister of Environment, Water and Forests in the Tariceanu, Ungureanu and Ponta governments, respectively in Gheorgheni (42.1%, 5 431) and Borsec (73.5%, 1 083) ; then two mandates from the AMT: Cristuru-Secuiesc (58.9%, 4,587 total valid votes) and Vlăhița (75.6%, 2,959); two other mandates were won by Independent Candidates, in Bălan (60.3%, 1,956) and Băile Tușnad (59.3%, 812), while the Municipality of Toplița, four legislatures away, went to the PSD representative (36.3%, 1,713 votes from the total of 4,709 validly cast votes); The Odorheiu-Secuiesc City Hall was won by Gálfi Árpád (68.2%, 8,590 votes out of the 12,584 votes validly cast), who in

2016 was the representative of the PCM-PPMT electoral alliance, and now he ran for POL.

In rural areas, 45 mandates from the 58 communes were obtained by UDMR, followed by PSD with six mandates, obtained in communes with a majority Romanian population (Corbu, Tulgheş, Gălăuţaş, Sărmaş, Subcetate and Voşlăbeni), the Hungarian Alliance from Transylvania, with three mandates (Căpâlniţa, Ciceu and Suseni), Independent Candidates also with three mandates (Ciucsângeorgiu, Feliceni and Lăzarea), respectively a single PNL mandate in Bilbor, which for 24 consecutive years was won by a PSD representative.

**Table 2.** Election of mayors in Harghita county, Romania, September 27, 2020  
Source: Central Electoral Office

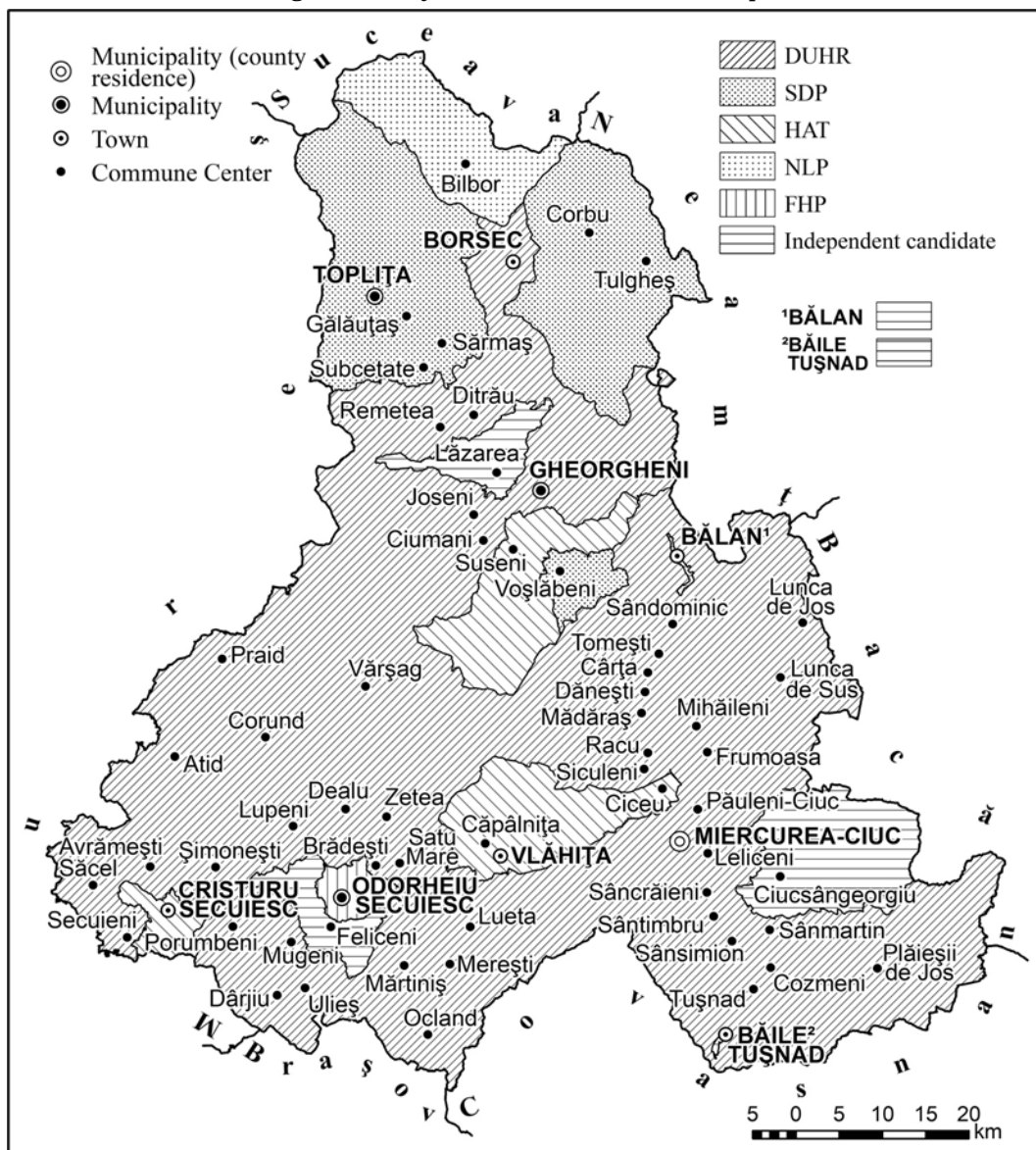
No.	Municipalities, towns, communes	Total voters registered in the lists	Total voters present at the polls	Attendance at the vote	Name and surname of the winning candidate	The political party	Valid votes	%	No. polling stations
1	Miercurea-Ciuc	34677	11108	32.0	Korodi Attila	UDMR	8072	73.7	23
2	Gheorgheni	16426	5590	34.0	Csergő Tibor-András	UDMR	2290	42.1	10
3	Topliţa	13140	4901	37.2	Olariu Dumitru	PSD	1713	36.3	11
4	Odorheiu-Secuiesc	31622	12840	40.6	Gálfi Árpád	POL	8590	68.2	22
5	Băile Tuşnad	1396	833	59.6	Butyka Zsolt	CI	482	59.3	1
6	Bălan	6355	2041	32.1	Iojiban Gheorghe	CI	1181	60.3	5
7	Borsec	2325	1110	47.7	Mik Jozsef	UDMR	797	73.5	2
8	Cristuru-Secuiesc	8965	4756	53.0	Konecz Hunor-János	AMT	2702	58.9	7
9	Vlăhiţa	6169	3063	49.6	Lőrincz Csaba	AMT	2238	75.6	5
10	Atid	2287	884	38.6	Szilveszter Attila	UDMR	416	53.7	5
11	Avrămeşti	2188	737	33.6	Simó Dezső-Szabolcs	UDMR	657	100.0	4
12	Bilbor	2231	1418	63.5	Hângan Ilie-Daniel	PNL	951	69.1	2
13	Brădeşti	1651	681	41.2	Bokor Botond	UDMR	634	100.0	2
14	Căpâlniţa	1686	1058	62.7	Benedek László	AMT	811	78.7	2
15	Cîrţa	2295	1165	50.7	Gábor Tibor	UDMR	921	81.7	2
16	Ciceu	2327	1417	60.9	Péter Lukács	AMT	930	67.6	2
17	Ciucsângeorgiu	3951	2221	56.2	Reti Zsófia	CI	1257	58.8	7
18	Ciumani	3658	1599	43.7	Márton László-Szilárd	UDMR	1082	69.0	3
19	Corbu	1155	655	56.7	Țepeş-Focşa Romeo	PSD	501	78.7	2
20	Corund	4980	1880	37.7	Katona Mihály	UDMR	1852	100.0	6
21	Cozmeni	1656	648	39.1	Szántó László	UDMR	593	100.0	2

22	Dănești	1874	813	43.3	Bőjte Csongor- Ernő	UDMR	773	100.0	2
23	Dirjii	810	276	34.0	Istvan Adrián	UDMR	255	100.0	2
24	Dealu	3233	1198	37.0	Bálint Elemér- Imre	UDMR	1136	100.0	3
25	Ditrău	4808	1328	27.6	Puskás Elemér	UDMR	1227	100.0	5
26	Feliceni	2840	1591	56.0	Zsombori Levente	CI	985	63.8	7
27	Frumoasa	3023	1136	37.5	Ferencz Tibor	UDMR	819	75.4	3
28	Gălăuțaș	2019	801	39.6	Țăran Radu	PSD	661	86.0	3
29	Joseni	4756	1541	32.4	Gáll Szabolcs	UDMR	1500	100.0	4
30	Lăzarea	2964	1382	46.6	Danguly Ervin	CI	1006	75.0	3
31	Leliceni	1790	862	48.1	Nagy István- Alfréd	UDMR	334	40.2	3
32	Lueta	3045	1480	48.6	Mihály Dénes	UDMR	1032	71.8	2
33	Lunca de Jos	4325	1570	36.3	Gergely Karoly	UDMR	1482	100.0	5
34	Lunca de Sus	2490	1497	60.1	Pap Imre	UDMR	1120	77.5	4
35	Lupeni	3858	2263	58.6	Kovács Lehel	UDMR	2016	91.7	6
36	Mădăraș	1828	1159	63.4	Péter Dávid	UDMR	913	81.0	2
37	Mărtiniș	2373	1498	63.1	Jakab Attila	UDMR	950	65.3	10
38	Merești	1090	464	42.5	Tikos László	UDMR	431	100.0	1
39	Mihăileni	2263	1173	51.8	Izsák-Székely Lóránt	UDMR	432	38.67	4
40	Mugeni	2970	1899	63.9	Ülkei Zoltán	UDMR	1036	56.0	8
41	Ocland	998	466	46.6	Godra Lehel	UDMR	424	100.0	2
42	Păuleni-Ciuc	1624	965	59.4	Ferencz Csaba	UDMR	673	71.6	3
43	Plăieșii de Jos	2085	761	36.4	András Zoltán	UDMR	696	100.0	4
44	Porumbeni	1429	661	46.2	Gyerkó Levente	UDMR	653	100.0	2
45	Praid	5651	2866	50.7	Nyágrus László	UDMR	1436	52.5	5
46	Racu	1326	580	43.7	Császár Attila	UDMR	558	100.0	2
47	Remetea	5189	2719	52.3	Laczkó-Albert Elemér	UDMR	2604	100.0	4
48	Săcel	942	419	44.4	Nagy Lajos	UDMR	378	100.0	4
49	Sâncreieni	2158	675	31.2	Székely Ernő	UDMR	638	100.0	2
50	Săndominic	5197	1782	34.2	Karda Róbert	UDMR	1699	100.0	4
51	Sănmartin	1825	662	36.2	Birtalan Sándor	UDMR	625	100.0	2
52	Sânsimion	2824	1345	47.62	Kozma István- Florin	UDMR	1264	100.0	3
53	Sântimbru	1730	712	41.1	Kencse Előd	UDMR	692	100.0	2
54	Sărmaș	3266	1710	52.3	Mândru Valentin	PSD	814	48.4	4
55	Satu Mare	1630	629	38.5	Kovács Imre	UDMR	581	100.0	2
56	Secuieni	2334	1108	47.4	Balló Zoltán	UDMR	424	39.9	3
57	Siculeni	2316	959	41.4	Szentes Csaba	UDMR	922	100.0	2
58	Șimonești	3211	1622	50.5	Nagy János	UDMR	1219	77.1	8
59	Subcetate	1472	760	51.6	Rusu Vasile	PSD	376	50.8	1
60	Suseni	4256	1506	35.3	Egyed József	AMT	894	60.8	6
61	Tomești	2147	719	33.4	Kedves Róbert	UDMR	693	100.0	2
62	Tulgheș	2656	1138	42.8	Vancu Marcel	PSD	855	77.7	4
63	Tușnad	1741	829	47.6	Molnár József	UDMR	780	100.0	3
64	Ulieș	930	468	50.3	György Sándor	UDMR	349	76.3	5

65	Vârșag	1344	590	43.8	Tamás Ernő	UDMR	551	100.0	2
66	Voșlăbeni	1694	994	58.6	Tinca Mihail-Dumitru	PSD	452	47.6	2
67	Zetea	4841	1321	27.2	Nagy Attila	UDMR	1233	100.0	6

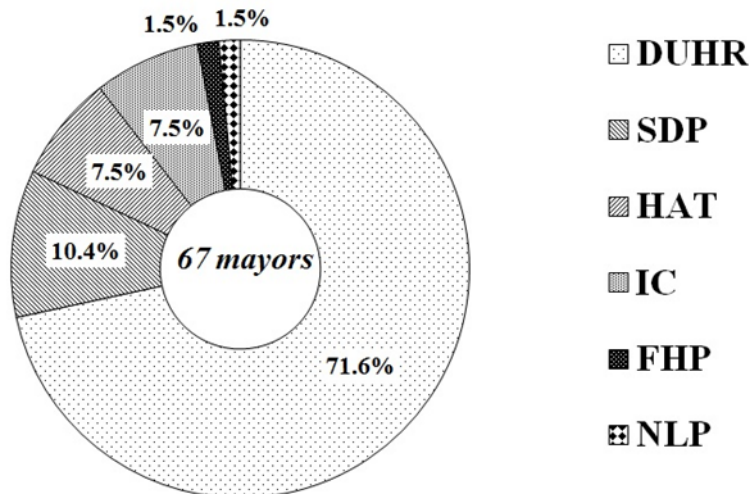
UDMR = Hungarian Democratic Union from Romania; AMT = Hungarian Alliance from Transylvania; POL = Party of Free People; PNL = National Liberal Party; PSD = Social Democratic Party; CI = Independent Candidate.

**Figure 1.** The territorial distribution of mayors, by parties and administrative-territorial units, in Harghita county, in the local elections of September 2020



Compared to the situation in 2016, we note the ascendancy of the UDMR (+1 mandate), the Gheorgheni City Hall being adjudged this time by a UDMR representative instead of the PCM; the mayors of Lueta and Merești communes passed from the status of Independent Candidates to UDMR; The Tușnad City Hall was won by a new UDMR representative, and in three other new situations the UDMR lost mayoral mandates, two in favor of the Independent Candidates and one for the Transylvanian Hungarian Alliance. The ethnic Hungarians represented by the Transylvanian Hungarian Alliance obtained five mandates (Cristuru-Secuiesc, Vlăhița, Căpâlnița, Ciceu and Suseni), but compared to 2016, they recorded a regression of -3 mandates (Odorheiu-Secuiesc, mandate lost by the PCM electoral alliance - PPMT, respectively two mandates lost by PCM, Gheorgheni and Băile Tușnad).

**Figure 2.** Repartiția mandatelor de primar pe partide politice, la alegerile din septembrie 2020, județul Harghita



In the localities where the Romanians have the highest frequencies, eight mayoral mandates were obtained, of which seven PSD (Toplița, Corbu, Gălăuțaș, Sărmaș, Subcetate, Tulgheș, Voșlăbeni) and one PNL (Bilbor), the only exception to 2016 being that of the "round of mandates" between Bilbor and Toplița. The Independent candidates kept their number of mandates (5), in the same localities, such as: Lăzarea, Bălan, Lueta and Merești, with an additional new mandate in Băile Tușnad.

Related to the electoral behavior of the population for the appointment of local councilors in Harghita county, in 2020, out of the total of 2,190 candidates, 835 councilors were appointed (two seats less than in 2016), the total number of valid votes cast being 107 877. The most mandates were won by the UDMR (570 mandates, 68.2% of the total mandates), followed by the Transylvanian Hungarian Alliance (138 mandates, 16.5%), the Social Democratic Party (49 mandates, 5.8%), the National Party Liberal (34 seats, 4%), Free People's Party (14 seats, 1.6%), Independent Candidate (13, 1.5%), Popular Movement Party (8, 0.9%), USR-PLUS Alliance (3 seats, 0.3%), the Pro Romania

Party (2, 0.2%), and the Hungarian Civic Party, the National Unity Bloc, the Humanist Power Party (Social-Liberal) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats Party each obtained a single mandate.

### **ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNTY COUNCILORS**

To obtain a mandate as a county councillor, 202 people applied, however, only 30 were successful (with one mandate less than in 2016), the number of valid votes cast being 105 199. The Harghita County Council is composed of the following spectrum political: UDMR, 19 mandates (64,894 votes, 61.68% of the total valid votes cast), AMT, four mandates (12,981 votes, 12.33%), three of the mandates being obtained in stage I and one mandate in stage II, of redistributions); PSD, 3 mandates (8 164 votes, 7.76%), with 2 mandates obtained in stage I and one mandate obtained in stage II), respectively PNL (7 906 votes, 7.51%) and the Party of Free People (7 565 votes, 7.19%), with two mandates each, obtained in the first stage.

For the position of president of the Harghita County Council, 8 people have applied, who, depending on the number of votes obtained, present themselves as follows: Borboly Csaba (UDMR) with 69,822 votes (64.54%); Mezei János (AMT) with 14,751 votes (13.63%); Rákossy Botond-József (POL) with 7,931 votes (7.33%); Buzilă Victor-Sebastian (PNL) with 6,086 votes (5.62%); Hirlav Costin (PSD) with 6,029 votes (5.57%); Virág Zsolt (USR-PLUS) with 1,362 votes (1.25%); Popa Constantin (PMP) with 1,356 votes (1.25%) and Pintilie Radu (PRO ROMANIA) with 839 votes (0.77%). From the above, once again the UDMR representative, Borboly Csaba, won the fourth term of office as president of the Harghita County Council, seconded by the same UDMR vice-presidents, as in 2016, Barti Tihamér and Biró Barna Botond.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The most important political formation in Electoral Constituency No. 21 – Harghita County is UDMR, which obtained an absolute majority in all levels of local public administration, starting with the president of the county council, and then continuing with the 19 mandates of county councillors (61.68%), 570 mandates of local councillors (68.2%) ( with 40 mandates more than in 2016) and 48 mayoral mandates (71.6%), with one mandate more than the local elections of 2016. The second political formation of ethnic Hungarians, AMT, obtained 4 mandates of county councillors, 138 mandates of local councillors and 5 mandates of mayors (Cristuru-Secuiesc, Vlăhița, Căpâlnița, Ciceu, Suseni), as well as a mandate of local councillor from the PCM.

Independent candidates won mandates only in local councils (13) and in mayor positions (5), two in urban (Băile Tușnad and Bălan) and three in rural (Lăzarea, Lueta and Merești); The Free People's Party has 2 mandates of county councillors, followed by 14 mandates of local councillors, respectively a mandate of mayor in Odorheiu-Secuiesc.

The political cache of the Romanian population is primarily represented by PSD, which obtained 3 mandates in the county council, 49 mandates in local councils (-4 mandates compared to 2016) and 7 mandates of mayors (6 in rural and one in urban), then PNL, with two mandates in the county council, 34 mandates in local councils (+1 mandate compared to 2016) and one term of mayor, in Bilbor, followed by PMP (8 local councillors), USR-PLUS (3 local

councillors) , Pro Romania (2 local councilors) and three parties with one local councilor mandate each (Bloc of National Unity, Party of Humanist Power (Social-Liberal) and Party of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats).

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