



Learn Your World: Hungary

Skills and Professional Development



To support your global practice, *ACC Docket* offers country-specific fun facts from your peers who've been there — literally.



Economy

GDP (purchasing power parity in USD)

Population
Corruption

US\$124.3 billion
9.818 million (2016 year-end figure)
According to Transparency International's 2016 Corruption Perception Index, Hungary ranked 57th "cleanest" (i.e., least corrupt) out of the 176 countries surveyed.

Additional resources

[The official travel guide to Hungary](#)
[The official travel guide to capital Budapest](#)
[English-language business and politic news](#)

The first thing that stands out when you arrive for a business meeting in Hungary, a landlocked country in the heart of central Europe, is the isolated language that may sound strange to a visitor. But no worries, the people you will meet can, at different skill levels, speak English or German.

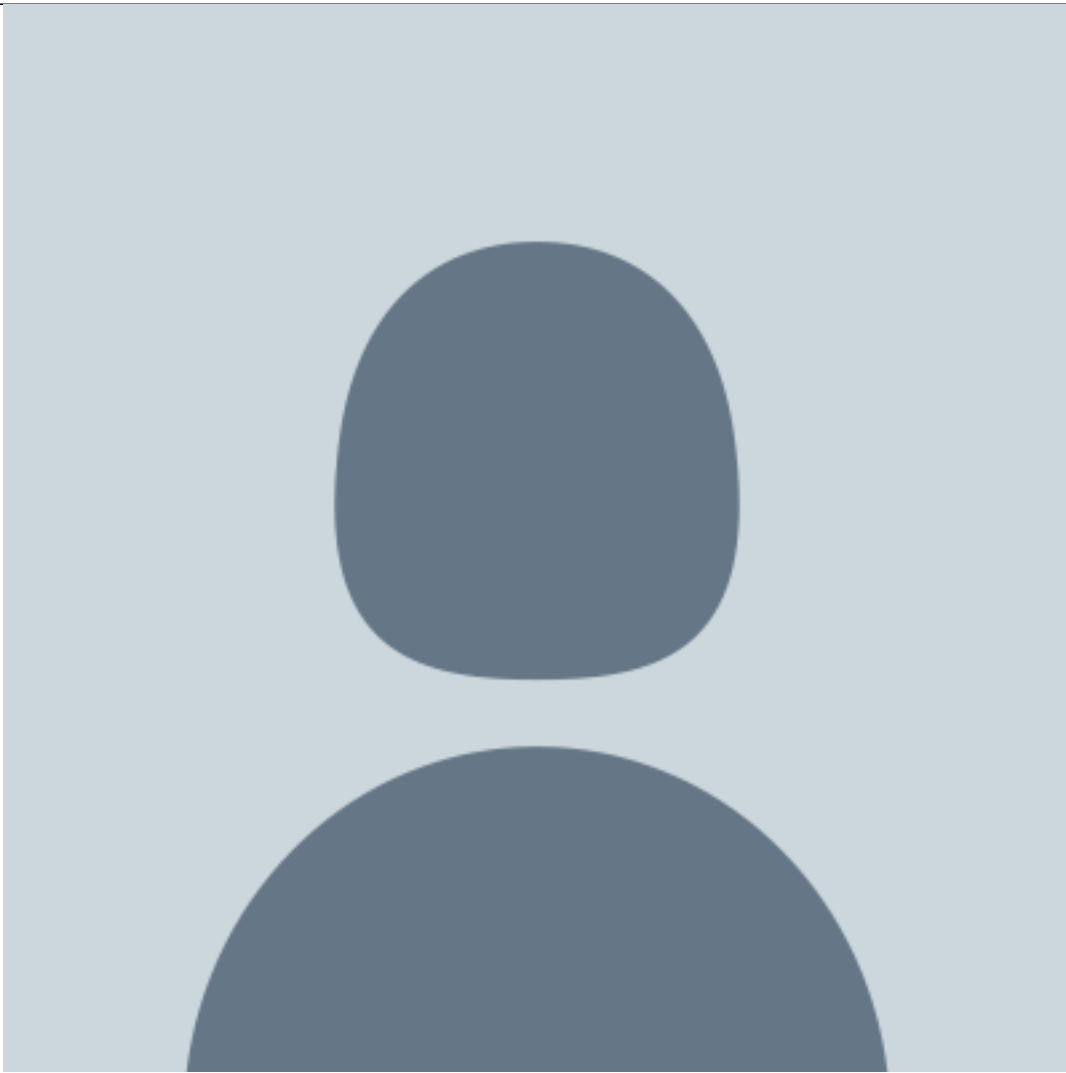
Personal relationships are crucial for doing business in Hungary. Hungarians prefer face-to-face meetings and clear business statements. Euphemisms, vague statements, or confrontational behavior can easily guarantee your failure. Be on time for a business meeting — they take this seriously. It is about the respect and reliability. This applies even more for lawyers who have some special respect in their culture, however, with enhanced liability.

Hungarians are known as hard negotiators, and are usually more direct than polite. They expect the same; they want to conclude deals with no gray areas. Nevertheless, they will open with an "ice-breaker," where they reward humor, good jokes, and short, funny stories. If you have one, don't be shy to share it to build some trust. Frequent eye contact is a must during the talks. It is indicative of sincerity and proves you have nothing to hide. Hierarchy is also very significant, and higher management has the final call in any important decision. Prepare accordingly, because it might slow the process.

Hungarians follow similar etiquette as many Europeans. Business dress is formal and conservative, and business cards are exchanged without formal ritual. A handshake is a normal greeting, but a gentleman must always wait for a lady to offer her hand first. In Hungary, unlike other countries, the family name precedes the first name.

Once your business day is over, you can enjoy the great hospitality that Hungarians are proud of. They will usually take you to a long business dinner, offering excellent, but heavy food specialties, drinking hard local liquors such as pálinka or unicum, and regaling you with their family stories. Learning a few words and phrases in Hungarian, and some information about Hungarian wines or the football Golden Team of the 1950s are the best ways to impress your host and ease your next session. Then you can feel that Hungarians are passionate, spirited, and friendly.

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