

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Potápi: Strengthening the communities that form the basis of Hungarian society is crucial

Speaking in Budapest on Friday at the 3rd conference of Hungarian Weekend Schools, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi emphasized the importance of strengthening the communities that form the basis of Hungarian society. Mr. Potápi presented the activities of the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad to 114 school heads from 30 different countries. He mentioned the objective of strengthening communities in Hungary, the Carpathian Basin and all over the world as part of the state secretariat's program for 2020, Year of Strong Hungarian Communities. He stressed the importance of families, children and young people. Speaking about a major event this year, the centenary of the Trianon Peace Treaty, Mr. Potápi said it is important to commemorate 1920 and what led to it, but it is even more important "to highlight moments when good things happened to the nation." He noted that these things will give Hungarians the strength to face the upcoming hundred years as a victorious nation, not a defeated one. Mr. Potápi stated that the aim of the conference was to bring together the heads of different schools, and compare their methodologies. He added that since its foundation in December 2011, the Hungarian Diaspora Council has had meetings every year, with the last one being attended by 92 member organizations and 19 observers.

Katalin Szili: indigenous minority regions are beneficial for majority societies

In Sopron on Saturday Prime Ministerial Commissioner Katalin Szili pointed out that indigenous minority regions are beneficial for majority societies. Speaking at the 3rd National Awareness and National Identity Conference entitled "We Belong Together", she stated that the only way for Europe to redefine itself in a globalized world is to keep its diversity of nations, which could be its main strength. According to Ms. Szili, five main objectives should be considered by the EU in order to protect minorities. These are the following: the question of indigenous minority regions is not an internal affair, but a European one; the basis of national minority protection is the right to an identity; citizenship does not equal national identity; identity requires providing individual and collective rights; and finally, indigenous minorities living in a country are components of that country.

Without Borders! Program popularized on information days

In Dombóvár on Wednesday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi commented that the Without Borders! Program will be popularized on information days. In the first stop on the tour, he said that the aim of this program is to provide Hungarian students with the opportunity to visit at least one Hungarian community abroad in their lifetime. The Hungarian government supports the objective of Hungarian students making friends with other Hungarian students living abroad, and to get to know the places that once belonged to Hungary.



He added that between 2011 and 2018, 300,000 Students took part in the program, and so far in the 2019-2020 school year this number is 101,000. Speaking about the application announced on 11 February, he pointed out that 7th grade and high school students will be granted maximum sums of HUF 6 and 7 million respectively, from a total allocation of HUF 4.7 billion, and the application deadline is 30 March.



Gergely Kovács ordained Archbishop in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia)

In Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia) on Saturday, Gergely Kovács was ordained archbishop of the Catholic archdiocese in Transylvania. Approximately 50 bishops participated in the ceremony in St. Michael's Cathedral, with thousands of congregants outside the cathedral. After the Holy Mass, clerics and lay people greeted the new archbishop. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's greetings letter was read by Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén. According to the Prime Minister, Áron Márton's words are still valid: "whoever is on watch must stay alert and work twice as hard." Mr. Orbán said that a new archbishop being ordained for the archdiocese in a year dedicated to national cohesion is a "milestone". Mr. Kovács is best known for being the postulator in the beatification process for Áron Márton, who was a Bishop of Alba Iulia. Furthermore, Mr. Orbán added, his service in Rome offered him a unique insight into the culture and life of Central European nations.

Saint Elizabeth's Catholic High School reopening ceremony in Gyimesfelsőlok

The restoration of the buildings of Saint Elizabeth's Catholic High School in Gyimesfelsőlok (Lunca de Sus), Harghita County has been finished. The investment was supported by the Hungarian government with HUF 500 million. Students and teachers of the school expressed their gratitude for the past 25 years and the restoration in a Holy Mass. After the event, Minister of State for Church and National Minority Relations of the Prime Minister's Office Miklós Soltész told the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) that hundreds of Hungarian religious schools have been nationalized during Hungary's history, and only few of them could be regained.

SZNT (Szekler National Council) focuses on civic initiatives for national regions on this year's Day of Szekler Liberty

Addressing the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) on Friday, president of the Szekler National Council Balázs Izsák pointed out that the Day of Szekler Liberty in 2020 will focus on European civic initiatives for national regions. As in past years, it will be held on 10 March in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş). According to Mr. Izsák, the event will also include petitions and emphasize solidarity and devotion to Szekler autonomy. He added that the petition will close on 7 May, four weeks before National Cohesion Day, and they expect Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin to be motivated by the proximity of the two dates.



Menyhárt: Hungarian should be a regional language

President of Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Menyhárt and leader of Vlast' party Igor Čombor participated in the political debate show of TA3 Television. Mr. Menyhárt started out in Slovakian but later switched to his mother tongue, Hungarian. He explained that this was his way of demonstrating that members of the Hungarian community are entitled to use their mother tongue in Slovakia. Furthermore, they should not be afraid to do so under any circumstances, as they are equal parts of the country. Mr. Menyhárt emphasized that MKP aims of a change of government, and he ruled out a coalition with Smer, the Slovak National Party and Kotleba – People's Party – “Our Slovakia”. He stressed that Hungarians have always fought on the right side in the political battles of Slovakia, and that Most-Híd (Bridge) Slovakian-Hungarian mixed party broke up with this tradition in 2016 when, as he put it, “they sold their souls to the Devil for 30 pieces of silver.”



Potápi: It is again worth being Hungarian in Vojvodina

in Palics (Palić) on Wednesday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that thanks to the economic development program in Vojvodina, it is again worth being Hungarian and doing business in Vojvodina, as it is equally possible to benefit from the opportunities offered by Serbia and the EU as well as those made available by the Hungarian government. The awards of the Vojvodina economic development program's mentor project were handed over in the city in Vojvodina. Mr. Potápi described the mentor project's past year as successful. He claimed that Vojvodina was chosen as the starting point for the mentor project because several other initiatives concerning Hungarian communities abroad were previously launched in the region and were then raised to a pan-national level. Mr. Potápi mentioned the granting of dual citizenship and the launch of the economic development program as examples. President of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians István Pásztor highlighted that it is the task of Hungarian politics in Vojvodina and politics in Hungary to foster the preservation of the identity of those living there and to promote their advancement in their native land.



Szijjártó: The issue of Hungarians in Transcarpathia will hopefully be solved

Speaking at a plenary session of the United Nations General Assembly, Péter Szijjártó expressed his hope that Hungary will be able to come to an agreement with the Ukrainian Deputy PM during his visit to Hungary in March concerning minority rights in Ukraine, as the current situation is not only unacceptable, but it also severely violates human rights. In his speech, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade pointed



out that Hungary has 150,000 reasons to have a democratic and progressive Ukraine at heart, as this is the number of Hungarians living there. As he recalled, Hungary has provided a support of approximately HUF 75 billion to Ukraine in the fields of economy, humanitarian affairs, healthcare and education. Besides, it helped in the caretaking of wounded soldiers and organized summer camps for 2,300 children. Nevertheless, it can't and won't accept the way Kiev ignores its international legal duties with the recently passed law on education and language use that deprives Hungarian minorities of a major part of their previously acquired rights.

