

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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Election 2014: FIDESZ party wins landslide

FIDESZ and its small ally, the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), have won the 2014 general election in Hungary and are expected to once more gain a two-thirds majority in Parliament. The opposition suffered a heavy defeat. The FIDESZ-KDNP alliance received 44.46 % of the vote; the left-wing coalition – which referred to itself as “the government-changers” – polled 26 %; the far-right opposition party Jobbik won 20.6 %; and the LMP (“Politics can be Different”) 5.27 %. According to the National Election Office’s data, the voter turnout was 61.2 %. Preliminary results show the governing parties winning in 96 election districts out of a total of 106, but in two districts the competition has been very close, and the results have not been finalized. A two-thirds majority for the FIDESZ-KDNP alliance may depend on these results, which will only be confirmed later in the week.

After Hungary’s voters had returned FIDESZ-KDNP to power for another four years, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that their party has established a new European record, proving that “Hungary is the most united country in Europe”. The Prime Minister promised that over the next four years he would work to make Hungary a “great place”. He thanked every citizen who had voted, adding that the day’s most remarkable fact was that it was the first time that Hungarians permanently resident abroad could vote in a Hungarian election.



Further Hungarian state secretaries appointed by Victor Ponta

On Thursday the Mediafax news agency reported that Romanian prime minister Victor Ponta signed the appointment of further Hungarian state secretaries nominated by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), which joined the Romanian government at the beginning of March. Sándor Pásztor, managing director of the Körös-vidék Water Regulatory Authority, has been appointed State Secretary for Water, Forestry and Fishing. Zoltán István, the president of the Kézdivásárhely/ Târgu Secuiesc branch of the RMDSZ, has become State Secretary at the Ministry of Transport. The Deputy Dean of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies Attila György has been appointed State Secretary at the Ministry of Finance. József Birtalan, who was vice-president of the Hargita County/Județul Harghita local council, has been reappointed as the head of the agency of civil servants after a break of six years. According to the agreement between the RMDSZ and the parties of the government led by the Social Democratic Union, the RMDSZ will have 14 state secretaries and positions equal to state secretaries in the new government.

Victor Ponta: Romania will never adopt ethnically-based autonomy

Reacting to demands by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) – who are part of the ruling coalition – Prime Minister of Romania Victor Ponta said in a television interview that the governing parties of Romania will never adopt ethnically-



based autonomy. In an interview on Monday evening on Antenna 3, the Prime Minister said on behalf of the Romanian parties in the Government that the coalition agreement with the RMDSZ does not mean that they would adopt ethnically-based autonomy. Mr. Ponta said that “Autonomy means the development of local self-organization in terms of economic, social and cultural aspects, but never ethnicity. We consider this matter closed. I know that the RMDSZ and the Hungarian minority support an autonomy model which is not viable in other countries either.” The Prime Minister added that statements by Hungarian politicians were linked to the election campaign.

Professors of MOGYE have given an ultimatum

On Wednesday Tibor Szilágyi, the Vice Rector responsible for the Hungarian department at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Marosvásárhely/ Targu Mures, informed the Hungarian news agency MTI that the university’s Hungarian professors are planning to quit all the managing bodies of the university and to resign from all the chief positions, in protest at the delay in addressing the question of the Hungarian department’s independence. The Vice Rector said that at a meeting on Tuesday evening the professors of the Hungarian department and representatives of Hungarian students came to this decision, in reaction to the Senate’s decision to postpone for a further year the question of the Hungarian department’s planned independence. The Vice Rector added that he had been informed by the Deputy President of the RMDSZ László Borbély that the minister without portfolio for higher education Mihnea Costoiu would visit Marosvásárhely/ Targu Mures the following week. Mr. Szilágyi said that they hope that the minister will help them to solve the unfortunate situation at the university.



Bilingualism at Slovakian railways – breakdown in the assertion of interests

At the parliamentary session on Tuesday, the members of the governing Smer-SD party rejected the proposed amending Act on railways. The purpose of the proposal had been to remove technical and legal obstacles in the law on minority language use and to enforce the provisions of the law concerning place-name signs at railway stations. Reacting to the issue, the head of the Party of Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi said: “The fact that the proposal on bilingualism on the railways has been rejected by Parliament is a surprise, since earlier news in Slovakia’s Hungarian-language media suggested that Smer would adopt it, because of prior consultations.” József Berényi added that “Béla Bugár’s ability to assert Hungarian interests in Parliament has come to an end.” The MKP expressed its hope that the new president of Slovakia Andrej Kiska – who was strongly supported by Hungarians in the election – will react to this question and will express his opinion on the proposal’s rejection, and that he will also put pressure on the Government to change its standpoint.



Where there is cooperation, nothing is impossible

During his visit to Vojvodina, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview given to the Hungarian newspaper Magyar Szó that “The Hungarian community in Vojvodina has found its feet and has been strengthened. Its national consciousness is stronger and its organization is better than before. If we think back over the past 10-15 years, we can see that it has developed into a vigorous community. This sign of life has been evident for everybody and it has also been proved by the results of the elections.” Talking about Hungary’s policy for Hungarian communities abroad in the coming years, the Prime Minister said that the Government of Hungary is planning to expand simplified naturalization to its widest possible scope, and – as a next step – it will strengthen institutions. Mr. Orbán added: “Where there is autonomy, we will deepen it – where there is not, we will build it up. We will establish coordination and cooperation between Hungarian autonomies, in order to make clear to everybody the harmony which can develop from the talent, knowledge and hard work of Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin.”



The Governor of Transcarpathia protests only against the demands of Jobbik

On Wednesday the Governor of Transcarpathia Valeriy Lunchenko – correcting his Tuesday announcement – told a reporter from the radio program “Határok Nélkül” (“Without Borders”) that in his announcement he had condemned only the separatist claims of the Hungarian far-right Jobbik party and did not object to the extension of Transcarpathian Hungarians’ rights and did not condemn the statement of Transcarpathian Hungarian civil organizations and historical churches. Some days earlier the Transcarpathian Hungarian civil organizations and historical churches had issued a joint statement, in which they expressed their concern about the events in Ukraine. At the same time they asked the government of the country to ensure equal opportunities for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, to protect their native language and its everyday use, to support the Hungarian educational network and to officially recognize the institution of dual citizenship. Mr. Lunchenko added that the activity of Jobbik and their demands would mean violation of Ukraine’s territorial integrity. He said that neither Hungary nor Ukraine agrees with the demands, since both countries support Ukraine’s territorial integrity.

