

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
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STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
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Council of Europe adopts Hungarian report on European national minority rights

On Tuesday 8 April the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) in Strasbourg adopted a report by Hungarian lawmaker Ferenc András Kalmár (Christian Democratic People's Party) on the situation and rights of traditional national minorities in Europe. The assembly called on member states to sign and ratify, if they have not yet done so, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages as soon as possible. It also urged member states to promote the official use of languages spoken by traditional national minorities in the territories in question. According to the Parliamentary Assembly, the protection of national minority rights must be treated as a political priority since "The protection of minorities is one of the means of preventing conflicts." During the debate on the report, Ferenc András Kalmár said that "The stability of society depends on the enforcement of the rights of national minorities."

Zsolt Semjén expresses thanks for the votes of Hungarian communities abroad

Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén thanked Hungarians living abroad for supporting the Fidesz-KDNP alliance with 95.5 % of the vote. In his announcement sent to the Hungarian news agency MTI, the Deputy Prime Minister wrote that Hungarians living abroad had "proved by their votes that we can rely on them, just as they can rely on us".

A new feature of this month's parliamentary election in Hungary was that Hungarian citizens with no permanent residence in Hungary could vote by mail for party lists. Voters had to pre-register in order to take part in the election. According to data from the National Election Office (NVI), a total of 193,793 Hungarians were registered for postal voting. The processing of ballot papers was completed on Thursday, and the number of valid votes thus cast was 128,378. Out of the valid votes, the Fidesz-KDNP alliance received 122,588: a share of 95.49 %.

Representatives of Hungarian communities abroad on Fidesz EP list

László Tókécs said that the fact that he can stand on the party list of Fidesz in the European Parliamentary Election in May is another important milestone in the process of the Hungarian nation's unification. On Thursday Viktor Orbán's party announced that the third place on the Fidesz party list would be occupied by the head of the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania, László Tókécs. In his statement issued after the Fidesz announcement, Mr. Tókécs said that the Fidesz-KDNP alliance is continuing the policy for Hungarian communities abroad which it started in 2010, and is



preparing a real “national team” for the European Parliament, ensuring places for ethnic Hungarians separated from the kin-state.

The Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament László Kövér said that representatives of Hungarian communities abroad will also be among the first 10-12 places on the Fidesz EP list, and – according to the party’s predictions – they are certain to win seats. Member of the European Parliament József Szájer – who on Thursday called the Fidesz EP list a national list – announced that representatives from Vojvodina and Transcarpathia would be in 9th and 10th places, while one from Slovakia would be in 21st place; their names will be released later.



Bănescu: territorial autonomy is a violation of Romania’s Constitution

President of Romania Traian Bănescu said that those who want autonomy within Romania seek to violate the constitution of the country and the state of Romania. In a two-hour-long live television interview on Sunday evening on the Realitatea news channel, the President of Romania touched on the question of aspirations for territorial autonomy in Szeklerland. Referring to the resolution adopted by the Council of Europe on Tuesday, the President said that “Autonomy is unconstitutional. We cannot talk about it, even if the decision by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) has given encouragement to advocates of ethnically-based autonomy.” The President also said that in his opinion Romania has now reached the point where the autonomy of local governments should also be reduced, as county council leaders consider the counties to be their own fiefdoms.



Hedvig Žák Malina’s harassment is mystifying

The Hungarian government finds it shocking that the Slovak chief prosecutor’s office has brought charges of suspected perjury against Hedvig Žák Malina. In a statement, the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad has said that it is “appalling” that in 2014 the justice system of Slovakia considers the harassment of Hedvig Žák Malina – who has in the meantime become a Hungarian citizen – to be one of its most important tasks. The State Secretariat finds the accusation mystifying, since the Slovak government has already apologized in a statement for pursuing Mrs. Žák Malina’s case, stating that rights covered by the European Convention on Human Rights might have been violated during the proceedings. The State Secretariat said that it fully agrees with the standpoint of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Slovakia, and asks the relevant Slovakian authorities to evaluate the available evidence in a sober and objective manner, both separately and collectively, and to stop harassing the mother of two.

In Budapest on Saturday’s memorial day for ethnic Hungarians deported from Slovakia. State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Zsolt Németh said that the new President



of Slovakia Andrej Kiska's statement in which he promises to grant Hedvig Žák Malina clemency is a great step forward in Hungarian-Slovakian relations. At the commemoration held in the Magyarság Háza, the State Secretary said that with Andrej Kiska's announcement Slovakia "has progressed light-years in making its political system a real democracy – not just for the Slovakian majority, but for the Hungarian minority also." Mr. Németh added that the President's announcement is also a step "towards historic reconciliation" in Hungarian-Slovakian relations.

SNS invites VMSZ to join government

The head of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Aleksandar Vučić has announced that the SNS has invited the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) to join the new Serbian government. On Monday, after the talks he held with President of the VMSZ István Pásztor at the SNS headquarters in Belgrád/Beograd, Mr. Vučić said that "We would like to have this coalition, and we would like to cooperate." According to the Serbian news agency Tanjug, Mr. Pásztor told journalists that his party would like to have state secretaries in the Serbian government, but Mr. Vučić said that he would not oppose the VMSZ also having ministers.

On Thursday, in the "Ma reggel" program on Hungarian television channel M1, Mr. Pásztor said that the VMSZ had revised its election program. He added that they are preparing to be part of the future parliamentary majority, but only if the priorities of the VMSZ are included in the Government's program. The members of the party have summarized these priorities in a document of 6 or 7 pages, putting down their specific goals and ideas. The head of the VMSZ said that these points cover the economy, living standards, social issues, health care, agriculture and public safety, as well as minority questions in the classic sense. A further aim of the party is to "fill the gap" in the field of laws crated by the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Serbia.

Talks on the rights of Ukraine's national minorities

On 9 April negotiations took place between a delegation from the United Nations Human Rights Council and representatives of Transcarpathian ethnic organizations. The delegation was led by Rita Izsák, UN independent expert on minority issues. The Vice-President of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) Géza Gulácsy and the Deputy Director General of the Transcarpathian Regional State Radio and Television Company Zoltán Kulin also participated in the meeting, in which issues were discussed such as the rights of Ukraine's nationalities and deficiencies in their enforcement.