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Eleven awards granted to Hungarians abroad

In Parliament on Tuesday 20 August, Hungary's national holiday, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén and State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi presented the award recognizing work for Hungarian communities abroad to ten organizations and an elderly lady. In an address at the ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén highlighted the unity and integrity of the Hungarian nation, saying that "We can only thrive as a nation in full if every part of our nation preserves its heritage." Regarding the award, the Deputy Prime Minister said that it is recognition and thanks for those who preserve and further build on their special qualities, and thus preserve the whole Hungarian nation.

State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said the honor is awarded to organizations, institutions and individuals in public life, education, culture, religion, science, mass communication and business in recognition of their outstanding work for Hungarian communities abroad.

The awardees include: a Calvinist foundation (Diakónia Keresztény Alapítvány); a Roman Catholic charity in Transylvania (the Gulyafehérvári (Alba Iulia) Caritas), which aims to socially reintegrate people living in poverty; the Haszmann Pál Museum of Romania's Cernat /Csernaton which is also recognized as a cultural center; the Zele Tribe fostering ancient Hungarian traditions and folk culture; the Hungarian Social and Cultural Association of Slovakia (Csemadok); 101-year-old retired teacher Ilona Tamás, who lost her Slovak citizenship after she had applied for and was granted Hungarian citizenship in 2011; the 70-year-old Vojvodina Hungarian daily Magyar Szó; a Vojvodina organization holding competitions for secondary pupils (Középiskolások Művészeti Vetélkedője); the Transcarpathian weekly Kárpátalja; a Swedish society set up to foster the Hungarian mother tongue (Őrszavak Anyanyelvápoló Egyesületet); and the Hungarian Cultural Council of Canada, which unites Hungarian organizations in Canada.



August 20 celebrations abroad

August 20 was also celebrated by Hungarian communities living outside Hungary. Speaking at a celebration in Ajnád/ Nădejdea in Hargita county/ Județul Harghita, the President of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that it is Christianity, the Hungarian language and Hungarian culture which throughout the centuries has preserved the Szekler community living in the foothills of the Eastern Carpathian Mountains, and the community should base its future on these values. At a St. Stephen's Day celebration organized by the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT) and the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (EMNP) in the main square of Marosvásárhely/ Târgu Mureș, the bread of the town was blessed. The President of the EMNP Tibor T. Toró said that "The celebration of Hungarian statehood is also considered the symbol of national



cohesion in Szeklerland.” He added that “This is the day when we, Hungarians, are together in soul, wherever we live.”

Speaking at a celebration in Transcarpathia’s Aknaszlatina/Solotvyna, the President of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMSKZ) László Brenzovics said that Hungarians living in diaspora – despite their difficulties – must remain loyal to St. Stephen’s heritage, and their main task is to preserve their Hungarian identity and their Christian faith in the future.

The head of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) said in a celebration held in Slovakia’s Dunaszerdahely/Dunajská Streda that St. Stephen’s heritage is still an example to be followed by Hungarians, because he established a state in a form which defended people living in it and ensured peace and cooperation.

The deputy leader of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) Károly Pál said in Vojvodina’s Mohol/Mol that the main aim of Hungarians living in Vojvodina is to remain Hungarian in their homeland. Mr. Pál added that the work which has been started must be continued in order to realize its goals, to make Vojvodina and Serbia a better place to live for Hungarians, a place where it is worth living, returning to, founding families in and building a Hungarian future in.



Breton Cultural Institute and Basque Nationalist Party join SZNT’s lawsuit

At a roundtable discussion on Szeklers’ autonomy efforts held at the Hungarian Days event in Kolozsvár/Cluj on Friday afternoon, the President of the Szekler National Council (SZNT) Balázs Izsák announced that the Breton Cultural Institute of France and the Basque Nationalist Party of Spain have submitted their application to intervene in the lawsuit launched by two representatives of the SZNT against the European Commission (EC) at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg; the lawsuit came about because the EP had rejected registering the SZNT’s citizens’ initiative on national regions. Slovakia, Greece and Romania have already joined the lawsuit on the side of the defendant, the European Commission. The aim of the leaders and partners of the SZNT is to make the EU pay attention – by means of their citizens’ initiative – to regions which differ from other regions because of their national, ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic peculiarities. The adoption of the initiative would strengthen Szeklerland’s efforts for autonomy. Balázs Izsák added that out of the 153 local governments of Szeklerland, 27 have already adopted a resolution supporting autonomy which has been sent to the Council of Europe and the competent bodies of the EU, as well as to the members of the Romanian government.

Hunor Kelemen: every candidate will make use of the “Hungarian card”

Hunor Kelemen – the head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) and the party’s presidential candidate – has given an interview to Hungary’s Kossuth Radio, talking about the division among Hungarian political forces in Romania and the “Hungarian card” which may be used by Romanian presidential



candidates. Mr. Kelemen said that the campaign has two main themes: the first one is autonomy demanded by Hungarians, while the second one concerns changes which should be made in Romania, especially to its constitutional structure and the President's sphere of authority. He added that the current framework of Romania's constitution does not make possible the realization of any concept of autonomy. Mr. Kelemen said that during the election campaign – in his opinion – every candidate will make use of the “Hungarian card”. If Romanian politicians consider that this might bring them votes, whether they do so or not will not depend on the candidate's surname or first name.



Minorities do not ask for more financial support

Regarding next years' budget to be allocated for minority culture, the Government Commissioner's Office for Minorities has said that they “did not ask for more because we thought we could not ask for it, but if we had got more, we would have been glad.” The office said that this year it had to reduce its expenditure by 9.9 % because of the consolidation of public finances, therefore the budget for minority culture (which was 4.25 million euros in 2013) was reduced to 3.82 million in 2014. The office added that public finances cannot be higher next year.



István Pásztor and Aleksandar Vučić support unity government

The President of the Provincial House of Representatives in Vojvodina and Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić have agreed that a unity government should be formed in the province. The planned government would have a mandate with a predetermined period and all parliamentary parties would participate in it. After talks with the Prime Minister, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that the unity government should determine its duties and deadlines in advance, which would be followed by the timetabling of elections. According to the Serbian news agency Novosti, István Pásztor will start talks concerning the formation of the new unity government in Vojvodina at the beginning of next week at the latest.



Zoltán Balog: Transcarpathian leaders guarantee safety

Hungary's Minister for Human Resources Zoltán Balog paid a two-day visit to Ukraine's Transcarpathia, where he was received by the governor of the county Valeriy Lunchenko and the head of the Transcarpathian County Council Ivan Baloga. After the talks, the minister informed the press that the “The two principal leaders of Transcarpathia have both provided guarantees on the safety of the ethnic Hungarian minority, the county's stability and the preservation of European orientation in Transcarpathia.”



In Beregszász/Berehove the Minister officially opened the renovated headquarters of the Federation of Hungarian Teachers in Transcarpathia (KMPSZ), the reconstruction of which received 13 million Forints from Hungary's Ministry for Human Resources and the Bethlen Gábor Fund Management Ltd. After the opening ceremony, the Minister held talks with the leaders of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ), during which the parties discussed the topical problems of Hungarian-language education in Transcarpathia.

On Saturday Mr. Balog officially opened the renovated building of the local Hungarian reformed high school and its dormitory in Nagyberég/Velyki Berehy near Beregszász/Berehove. Speaking at the opening ceremony, he said that "Those who build schools want to stay, and want others – who go to those schools – to stay as well." The Minister told the audience of almost five thousand people that Hungary – and thus, the Hungarian government – will not leave the side of "its Transcarpathian Hungarian brothers", adding that in order to support the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, relations should be strengthened.

