

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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The payment of educational assistance starts in September

State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi has announced that the payment of educational assistance (Szülőföldemen magyarul!) to successful Hungarian applicants abroad will start in September, and – as in previous years – will be transferred to every recipient's account by the end of the year. The State Secretary added that this year the Hungarian government has set aside 110 billion forints (343 million euros) from government spending, and this measure also affects the Bethlen Gábor Fund. As a result, this year everyone who has applied for the educational assistance will receive 17,200 forints (54 euros) per person. Therefore, the amount of student assistance aid remains unchanged, the State Secretary added.



RMDSZ's draft law on Szeklerland's autonomy is criticized

Although the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) will make its draft law on Szeklerland's territorial autonomy public only this week, the document – which has been leaked by a Romanian newspaper – has already been strongly criticized. The draft law, which has been made public by the Romanian newspaper Hotnews both in Romanian and Hungarian, is attributed to the RMDSZ and states that the Szeklerland Autonomous Region would consist of three territorial administrative units: Kovászna megye/Județul Covasna, Hargita megye/ Județul Harghita and Maros megye/ Județul Mureș. The draft law has been strongly criticized, in spite of the fact that the RMDSZ has told the Hungarian news agency MTI that the party considers only that version of the draft law official which will be made public on the RMDSZ's website. Deputy Prime Minister and Executive Chairman of the Social Democratic Party (the RMDSZ's coalition partners) Liviu Dragnea said that there is no chance of ever realizing the autonomy of the Hungarian community living in a block. The Szekler National Council (SZNT) said that the draft law breaks up the unity of the autonomy movement in Transylvania. Romania's Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM) also issued a statement, saying that the draft law is unconstitutional. The CSM added that a document which – according to the CSM – violates the rule of law and the nature of Romania as a single and indivisible nation-state cannot even be made the subject of public debate.

At the weekend, reacting to the CSM's statement, the head of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen said that "As the body representing the independence of domestic jurisdiction, the Superior Council of Magistracy has exceeded its constitutional remit in expressing its political standpoint on a political topic in connection with a draft law appearing in the press." In its statement the RMDSZ underlined that the CSM may not present itself as a political actor.

Replying to questions from journalists regarding the leaked draft law, the Prime Minister of Romania Victor Ponta, who was making a visit to Csíkközvás/ Cozmeni accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Hunor Kelemen and Minister of Regional



Development Liviu Dragnea, said the following: "I am committed to decentralization. If autonomy means decentralization, I see no conflict, and we are in complete agreement."

Speaking to the Romanian news agency Agerpres, the head of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen said that the draft law on autonomy is not a government project, but a political project which will be put to public debate before being submitted to the parties.



Dual citizenship: decision on 17 September

After three years, it might emerge whether or not the 2010 Slovakian Act on Citizenship violates the Constitution. Anna Pančurová, the Constitutional Court's spokesperson, informed the Hungarian newspaper Új Szó that the body could pass judgment on 17 September. She said that "At 10 a.m. there will start a public hearing, in which the decision is expected to be announced". The Constitution of Slovakia states that nobody can be deprived of their citizenship against their will. This is the article referred to by those Hungarians in Slovakia who were deprived of their Slovakian citizenship as a result of acquiring Hungarian citizenship after 2010.

As has been reported, so far 886 persons have been deprived of their Slovakian citizenship under the 2010 law. Slovakia's Ministry of the Interior has already prepared the draft of the new Act on citizenship, but this would not change the situation for Hungarians in Slovakia who became citizens of Hungary through the simplified naturalization procedure, since it suggests that only those people with a permanent residence in the other country cannot be deprived of their citizenship.



István Pásztor invites parliamentary parties to negotiations on Vojvodina

On Wednesday the President of the Provincial House of Representatives in Vojvodina István Pásztor invited the leaders of the parties of the Vojvodina Parliament to hold negotiations on the future of the province. At a press conference held on Wednesday, Mr. Pásztor said he hopes that the leaders or representatives of the parties will take part in the conference scheduled for Tuesday, 16 September. He added that "Our aim is to find a solution to the current situation. I think that we should sit down and discuss the important issues regarding Vojvodina. The responsibility of provincial authorities is to solve problems and not to prove their own legitimacy."





Ukraine rejects the establishment of a Hungarian electoral district

The Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) has lodged a legal protest against the decision of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, because the body has not established a Hungarian electoral district in Transcarpathia. Despite the party's protest and the submission of appeals, no Hungarian district will be established. Both the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CVK) and the Kyiv Administrative Court of Appeal have rejected the KMKSZ's appeals, referring to formal deficiencies.

Reacting to the CVK's decision, the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad issued a statement. This declares that the State Secretariat finds the decision of the CVK unacceptable, since it makes it impossible for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia to have a representative in the Ukrainian parliament. State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi said that democracy – and the operation of a democratic system of institutions – is particularly important in the current internal situation in Ukraine, and therefore the State Secretariat finds it worrying that the legal settlement of an issue important for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia has ended in failure. The State Secretary added that it is regrettable that, despite Ukraine's Electoral Act (which was amended last year) and the agreement concluded between the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ), no Hungarian electoral district will be formed, and therefore the Hungarian community will have no chance to send a representative to the Parliament of Ukraine.

