

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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Deputy Prime Minister: New Hungarian citizens to number 1 million by 2018

Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén has said that Hungary is set to have one million new citizens through its dual citizenship scheme by the end of the current government term. He said that the authorities had received 700,000 applications for Hungarian citizenship by the end of last year, and 650,000 people had already taken their oaths. He added that further restrictions in the simplified naturalization procedure are not justified, but minor corrections might take place.

The Deputy Prime Minister welcomed the fact that Hungarian advocacy became stronger in every neighboring country where elections were held in 2014. He added that the greatest success was achieved in Vojvodina, where the cultural autonomy of Hungarians was realized. Mr. Semjén said that Hungarians in Ukraine's Transcarpathia are in the most difficult and dangerous position among Hungarian communities abroad, because their country is involved in a military conflict and Ukrainian nationalism has re-emerged. He added that the Hungarian government is providing every kind of support for Transcarpathian Hungarians. Mr. Semjén said that Hungary should act just as Israel, defending its diaspora throughout the world.

The Deputy Prime Minister emphasized that the result he is most proud of is that there is consensus between Hungarian political parties and the whole of society on the three questions affecting Hungarian communities abroad, i.e. that these communities are entitled to Hungarian citizenship, the right to vote and autonomy.

Kövér: Protecting Hungarians abroad was one of the main tasks in 2014

Evaluating the 2014 year, the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament László Kövér said that the protection of Hungarians abroad was one of the most important tasks and aims of the government's policy for Hungarian communities abroad. Mr. Kövér said that the ensuring of the safety of Hungarians in Transcarpathia was a challenge of the previous year, adding that "in Hungary everyone must be aware of the fact that these people live in a country which is involved in a war conflict, and men living there can whenever be conscripted in the army." Considering the situation of Hungarians in Romania, the Speaker of the Parliament highlighted the conflicts connected with the use of national symbols, while regarding the kin-state, Mr. Kövér said it was a success of 2014 that Hungary draw attention to the situation of minorities within the European Union.



SZNT: 2014 was the year of "the march of Szeklerland's local governments"

According to the evaluation of the Szekler National Council (SZNT), "2014 was the year of the great march of Szeklerland's local governments." The head of the SZNT Balázs Izsák referred to the fact that throughout 2014 Szeklers held several forums



demanding the realization of Szeklerland's territorial autonomy. For example, a resolution was adopted by forty-four local governments of Szeklerland expressing their intention to belong to an independent administrative unit named Szeklerland where autonomy is guaranteed and Hungarian is also used as an official language.

The phrase "great march" refers to an event organized in October 2013 which was attended by approximately 120,000 people who were demanding the autonomy of Szeklerland. The participants of the march formed a 53 kilometer-long human chain along the Szeklerland section of road number 11 which links Brassó/Braşov and Bákó/Bacău.

Hunor Kelemen: the period of making policy in opposition begins

The head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen has said that by the establishment of Victor Ponta's new government and the adoption of the 2015 budget, the interim period for the RMDSZ has been closed and in the future the RMDSZ will participate in Romania's political life as an opposition party. Mr. Kelemen added that the National Liberal Party (PNL) which had supported Klaus Iohannis in the presidential election, had neither decided yet which direction it would represent. He added that some members of the party had even had plans about overthrowing the government, while others wanted to have early elections. Mr. Kelemen said that Prime Minister Victor Ponta's former statement (according to which the RMDSZ should remain in the government in order to prevent the radicalization of the Hungarian community) was false.



The case of Hedvig Malina continues

The District Court of Nitra/Nyitra has dropped the charges for perjury against Hedvig Žák-Malina. The court stated that as a Hungarian citizen, Hedvig Žák-Malina has a right to have the Hungarian translation of the indictment, but the attorney general had not submitted it and not informed the defendant of her right. The attorney general's office appealed, as a result of which the case was brought before the regional court.

In 2006 Hedvig Žák-Malina was attacked by two men in Nitra/Nyitra, because she was talking in Hungarian in the street. The perpetrators were not arrested by the police, but Ms. Malina was charged with perjury by the Slovak attorney general. Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico and the country's Minister of Interior Robert Kaliňák said that "it is beyond doubt that the attack did not happen". The incident caused a general resonance and represented a highly controversial and debated issue of Hungary-Slovakia relations.





István Pásztor: 2014 was successful for Hungarians in Vojvodina

The head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor has said that 2014 was a successful year for Hungarians living in Vojvodina. The president of the VMSZ said that although the social and economic situation of the community has become worse than it was a year ago, Hungarians have managed to reach sufficient cohesion and cooperation at the level of community to enable them to express themselves and develop their vision for the future. Considering the plans for the future, Mr. Pásztor emphasized the importance of the cooperation with the Hungarian government. He added that they are working on such economic and regional development schemes, for which Hungary could provide resources and which would include not just traditional areas such as culture and education, but the real sector as well.



Ildikó Orosz is appointed deputy of Transcarpathia's County Council

According to the decision of the Transcarpathian County Election Commission made on 10 December, Ildikó Orosz – who participated on the list of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) – was appointed deputy of the Transcarpathia County Council. Ildikó Orosz will replace László Brenzovics in the county council since Mr. Brenzovics has become deputy of the Ukrainian Parliament. Since 1996 Ildikó Orosz has been the rector – later president – of the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute and the head of the Hungarian Teachers' Association of Transcarpathia.

