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Students of Hungarian vocational schools abroad can apply for summer internship program in Hungary

The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office is accepting applications from students of Hungarian-language vocational educational institutions abroad to participate in a summer internship program in Hungary under the program entitled "2015 – the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad." With the development of Hungarian-language vocational education abroad, the state secretariat intends to contribute to the economic development of the Carpathian Basin, and providing an opportunity for students to receive appropriate practical training is an essential element in this. The aim of the call is to strengthen the cooperation between educational institutions in Hungary and abroad, and to share experience by providing an opportunity for students of Hungarian-language vocational educational institutions abroad to spend one month in vocational educational institutions in Hungary.



The delegation demanding autonomy for Szeklerland has partial success in Strasbourg

The session of the monitoring committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Municipalities of the Council of Europe held in Strasbourg on Tuesday has not brought complete success for the delegation demanding autonomy for Szeklerland. The aim of the delegation was to make the committee examine the document in which forty-eight municipalities of Maros/Mureş, Hargita/Hargitha and Kovászna/Kovasna counties declare their intention to belong to an independent administrative unit named Szeklerland. After the almost one-hour-long debate, the president of the body Philippe Receveur declared that the monitoring committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Municipalities is not competent for examination of the document. The monitoring committee referred the case back to the bureau of the congress. Although the delegation of Szeklerland had expected a better result, the case cannot be considered as lost, since the Council of Europe (CoE) will be monitoring Romania throughout the whole of 2016.

Meanwhile, Romania's draft strategy on public order and public safety for 2015–2020, which was issued for public debate on Tuesday by the Romanian Ministry of Interior, would define demands for ethnic autonomy as a source of danger to public safety. The document published on the website of the ministry lists the sources of dangers threatening public safety, and "racism, xenophobia, extremism and any other form of intolerance which is aimed at achieving ethnic autonomy for certain areas or regions" occupy first place on the list.



RMDSZ proposes establishment of a regional alternative electoral threshold

The Council of Alliance Representatives of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) held a session on Saturday in Zilah/Zalău, at which its members discussed proposed amendments to the alliance's program and charter. Speaking at the session, the president of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen announced that his party proposed inclusion of an alternative threshold in the Romanian electoral Act (currently under preparation), which would ensure a parliamentary presence for regional parties even if they do not reach the five percent threshold. Mr. Kelemen added that they would also ensure parliamentary mandates for regional parties and political organizations which receive twenty percent of the vote in at least four counties. The head of the RMDSZ stressed that the alternative threshold is necessary, because it would ensure that under no circumstances would Hungarians in Transylvania be without a parliamentary presence.

Hungarian cooperation for the mayor's post in Marosvásárhely

On Friday representatives of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (EMNP) and the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP) signed a declaration on launching a joint candidate for the mayor's post in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş and jointly organizing a primary election. The primary election will be held on 31 May in Marosvásárhely, where the mayoral candidate – who can be supported by the whole Hungarian community at the municipal elections scheduled for spring 2016 – would be nominated. In their declaration, the parties stressed that division among Hungarians had reduced the strength of the community, but now they are calling on voters to cooperate in order to support a fair contest.



The Synagogue remains the property of Szabadka

On Tuesday the Mayor of Szabadka/Subotica Jenő Maglai, the President of the Szabadka Jewish Community Róbert Szabados and the head of the Hungarian National Council (MTN) Jenő Hajnal signed a contract on the management and use of the Synagogue in Szabadka. The Hungarian government will allocate HUF 500 million (EUR 1.6 million) for the renovation of the Synagogue, which will mainly be spent on the renovation of the building's interior. The complete renovation of the building is estimated to be finished by 2017 at the latest, after which it will be put into use again, serving cultural, religious and other purposes. Mr. Maglai emphasized that the synagogue will remain the property of the town, and the management of the building will be the responsibility of the SOS Synagogue Foundation, which consists of the local government, the Hungarian National Council and the Jewish community.



The KMKSZ urges the restoration of peace in Eastern Ukraine

At its 26th annual congress in Beregszász/Berehove on Saturday, the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) urged the restoration of peace in Eastern Ukraine, the urgent settlement of the economic crisis in the country and the ensuring of rights for national minorities living in Ukraine, in accordance with the relevant European norms. The agenda of the congress focused on the effects of the Ukrainian crisis on the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia and the permanence of Hungarians as a community. In his speech, the president of the KMKSZ (elected one year ago) and member of the Ukrainian Parliament László Brenzovics expressed his thanks to the Hungarian government, Hungarian society and Hungarian communities living abroad for the support they have given to Transcarpathian Hungarians. Addressing the event, the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Parliament Zsolt Németh emphasized that it is important that Hungary continues cooperation with Transcarpathia. The President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT) and Member of the European Parliament László Tőkés, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor and the Vice President of Csemadok also assured the Hungarian community of Transcarpathia of their communities' solidarity, and announced that they have started to collect donations for Transcarpathian Hungarians.



Árpád János Potápi holds talks with the leaders of the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Croatia

In his office on Thursday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi received the leaders of the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Croatia (HMDK): President Sándor Jakab and Executive Chair Róbert Jankovics. During the talks, the parties discussed topical issues concerning the Hungarian community in Croatia, with special regard to the situation of native language educational institutions, which are struggling with serious problems due to the low numbers of children. The leaders of the HMDK expressed their solidarity with their fellow-countrymen in Transcarpathia, who find themselves in a difficult situation at present, and said that, in cooperation with the Community of Hungarian Youths in Croatia, they have started a collection of donations for Hungarian families living in Transcarpathia.

