

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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## Court annuls fine for singing the Hungarian National Anthem

In a judgment passed on Friday, the court of Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe annulled the protocol in which the Prefect of Kovászna County had fined the Kovászna organization of the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP) for singing the Hungarian National Anthem. The court stated in its judgment that the Prefect had fined the Hungarian Civic Party unlawfully, and exempted the MPP from paying the fine of five thousand leu (EUR 1140). At the same time, the court refused the MPP's request that it find as unlawful the regulation laid down in a government decision which served as the basis for imposition of the fine.

On 2 December 2014 the Hungarian Civic Party was fined by the Prefect of Kovászna/Kovasna County (who has since been discharged), because members of the party had sung the Hungarian National Anthem on 4 June 2014 at a commemoration event marking the anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon. The Prefect referred to a government decision adopted in 2001 which states that in Romania the national anthem of a foreign country is only allowed to be sung at official visits by dignitaries from the country in question.

## Attila Markó resigns as member of the Romanian Parliament

Attila Markó, a member of the Romanian Parliament representing the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) – who has been suspected of misuse of power because of his participation in illegal restitution decisions – resigned his mandate on Wednesday. Mr. Markó announced his resignation shortly before the plenum of the Romanian Parliament was due to decide on the Public Prosecutor's request for his arrest. In November 2014 Mr. Markó was given a three-year suspended prison sentence because of his participation in the restitution to the Reformed Church of the Szekler Mikó High School of Sepsiszentgyörgy. Mr. Markó, who has been staying in Hungary since December, said that "Being innocent of the charges, it was the hardest decision of my life to voluntarily quit the work to which I had devoted my life." He added that he had lost all confidence in Romanian legal procedures when he was given a three-year suspended sentence because of the restitution of the Szekler Mikó High School; the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) had demanded his arrest only because he was a member of the committee which decided on the compensation. Mr. Markó added that he does not yet plan to return to Romania.

## The EMNT and SZNT prepare for "political self-defense"

At a press conference held in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca on Monday, the leaders of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT) and the Szekler National Council (SZNT) announced that the two parties are preparing for political self-defense and a joint fight for Szeklerland's autonomy. The president of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT) László Tőkés said that the strategic cooperation between the two councils would serve to establish an integrated system of multi-level autonomy for Hungarians living in Romania. The head of the EMNT added that



political self-defense is essential, since the Hungarian community of Transylvania is threatened by the Romanian authorities. As examples of this, Mr. Tókécs recalled that, according to a draft strategy of Romania's Ministry of Interior, demands for ethnic autonomy are considered to be dangers to public safety, and that a criminal investigation was launched against the head of the Szekler National Council (SZNT) Izsák Balázs in connection with the autonomy demonstration held on the Day of Szekler Freedom, on 10 March 2014.



## 21 new border-crossing points to be opened along the Slovak-Hungarian border

After talks with the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó, Slovakia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák said that Hungarian-Slovak relations are excellent and both countries can benefit from them. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó announced that twenty-one new border-crossing points will be opened between Hungary and Slovakia as part of a project to be launched this autumn. Mr. Szijjártó said that there are several cross-border infrastructure development projects under preparation, for example: a new ferry connection on the river Danube between the two countries; and the construction of a bridge in Komárom, for which Hungary and Slovakia have submitted a joint tender to the European Union.

## Via Nova youth organization protests against the deprivation of rights

On Sunday, young Hungarian people living in Slovakia held a demonstration in Kassa/Košice, protesting against the Kassa government program – still in force today 70 years after its adoption – which declares the collective guilt of Germans and Hungarians living in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia, and which serves as the basis for the deprivation of rights enforced in the Beneš Decrees. Those attending the event – which was initiated by the Slovakian Hungarian youth organization Via Nova – gathered in front of the former county hall of Kassa (the building in which the government program was adopted), in order to protest against the regulations which are still on the statute book after seven decades. The demonstrators held banners with slogans such as “We have been war criminals for seventy years, now we want peace at last”, “Down with the Kassa government program” and “Rehabilitation for Esterházy”.



## István Pásztor: We can represent the interests of Hungarians in Vojvodina only if we are part of the Serbian government

Prime Minister of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić announced in January that a comprehensive restructuring of the Serbian government would take place soon. The



restructuring will also affect the five state secretaries of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ), who were delegated by the VMSZ during the elections held last year. In his annual review speech, the head of the VMSZ István Pásztor said that it is extremely important that his party is part of the Serbian government, since this is the only way of representing the interests of the Hungarian community in Vojvodina. Mr. Pásztor added that the VMSZ must evaluate the work of its state secretaries have done so far, and outline the future objectives. He added that this is important for the party in order to give a realistic picture of its work during the restructuring of the Serbian government. Mr. Pásztor stressed that the coalition agreement has several elements which can contribute to long-term economic development, especially the ones concerning cross-border cooperation, and the issue of border-crossing points.



### Hungary condemns Russia's territorial aggression against Ukraine

On Thursday the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Parliament Zsolt Németh had talks in Kiev, where he said that Hungary, together with the other member states of the European Union, strongly condemns the territorial aggression Russia is committing against Ukraine on a daily basis. Mr. Németh emphasized that the aim of his two-day visit was to express Hungary's solidarity with Ukraine and commitment to its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. Concerning the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, Mr. Németh said that Hungarians want peace, stability and predictability above all, as well as a democratic Ukraine which can carry out constitutional reform and decentralization and guarantee the rights pledged by the Ukrainian government. Mr. Németh stressed that Hungary is continuously sending humanitarian aid to Hungarian towns and villages in Transcarpathia, as well as to other regions of Ukraine, adding that this work would be assisted by a charity coordination council with the participation of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and historic churches.

