

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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## The RMDSZ holds its twelfth congress

At its 12th congress in Cluj Napoca/Kolozsvár on Friday, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) re-elected Hunor Kelemen as its president for another four years. Mr. Kelemen had no rival in the vote, and was supported by 575 votes out of a total of 585. Speaking at the congress (the slogan of which was “Re-planning”), the re-elected president emphasized the importance of strengthening social organization. He said that “it is not newer and newer parties that the community needs, but an open and receptive alliance that is always capable of renewal.”

The event was welcomed by the heads of Hungary’s political parties, the leaders of Hungarian organizations abroad and the president of a Transylvanian Hungarian opposition party.

Addressing the event, Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary and the head of the Christian Democratic People’s Party Zsolt Semjén said that Hungarians in Transylvania are obliged by their historical moral and political past to remain unified. The Deputy Prime Minister added that the RMDSZ is a guarantee of strong Hungarian advocacy in Transylvania, and it should not be allowed to be weakened. Mr. Semjén added that minority rights are human rights at the level of community, and in the field of human rights there can be no “bargaining”.

At the end of the congress, the program of the RMDSZ was amended and documents supplementing the program were adopted. At the press conference held at the end of the congress, Mr. Kelemen said that the program has hardly been changed, and only the points which have lost their validity have been abolished. Considering the resolutions, Mr. Kelemen highlighted the one on education policy. He said that the RMDSZ wants to pay particular attention not just to ensuring education in one’s mother tongue, but also to the quality of education.

The congress was also attended by the Prime Minister of Romania Victor Ponta, while the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis sent a message to the congress participants, read by one of his councilors, in which he praised the role of the 25-year-old RMDSZ in the strengthening of democracy in Romania, attributing it to the party’s openness to cooperation and dialogue.

## László Trócsányi: the case of the Szekler Mikó High School must be settled

After talks held in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca on Hungarian-language higher education in Romania and the issues of church restitutions, Minister of Justice László Trócsányi declared that the case of the Szekler Mikó High School of Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe must be settled urgently. The minister, who arrived in Kolozsvár on Thursday at the invitation of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, met church leaders and visited Hungarian-language higher education institutions. During his stay in the city, the minister also took part in the 12th congress of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ). Having talks with the leaders of the party, Mr. Trócsányi said that the issue of restitution causes great concern not only among church leaders but also among Hungarian politicians in Romania. He added



that the issue is the kind of “acute” question which makes the relations between Hungary and Romania difficult, adding that it must be settled urgently. The minister emphasized that the case of the Szekler Mikó High School has been brought before the European Court of Human Rights, and stressed that Hungarian churches are also concerned and the Hungarian government has also taken a stand on the issue. The final ruling in the restitution case of the building of the Szekler Mikó High School was adopted on 26 November 2014. The ruling re-nationalized the building – which had been the property of the Reformed Church of Transylvania since 2000 – and declared the members of the restitution committee guilty. The case caused great international consternation.

### Fine for the installation of bilingual street signs in Marosvásárhely

The local police of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş – which is under the authority of the city’s local government – has fined two volunteers of the Civil Commitment Movement (Cemo) 5000 leu (1100 EUR) for installing bilingual street signs in the town. The police considered the bilingual street signs to be “advertisements”. The two volunteers – Miklós Barabás and Előd Kincses – reported on the case in a press conference held in Marosvásárhely on Thursday. Mr. Barabás said that over the past weeks they had installed almost 80 bilingual street signs in the city on buildings owned by people who had earlier agreed to this. Mr. Kincses said that they had challenged both of the charges in the city court, and had filed a complaint against the local police commander and the two policemen responsible for the case, for abuse of power.

Since 2001 the Romanian local government Act has declared bilingual signs to be legal in settlements in which a national minority constitutes at least 20 percent of the population. In Marosvásárhely the Hungarian community became a minority only after ethnic conflicts in 1990 led to waves of migration. In the 2011 census, Hungarians constituted 43 percent of the town’s population.



### László Kövér discusses the issues of Vojvodina Hungarians in Serbia

The Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament László Kövér has made an official visit to Serbia. On the first day of his visit, the house speaker held talks with the president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) in Szabadka/Subotica. The parties discussed the issues scheduled to be discussed at the meeting of the two countries’ house speakers. Mr. Kövér and Mr. Pásztor also reviewed the issues affecting both Serbia and the Hungarian community in Vojvodina, including the question of Serbia’s process of accession to the European Union. The Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament reiterated that the Hungarian government supports Serbia’s Euro-Atlantic integration. On Thursday, Mr. Kövér met the Speaker of the Serbian Parliament Maja Gojković, Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić and President Tomislav Nikolić in Belgrade. The parties agreed that next year a commemoration will be held in the



capital of Serbia, marking the 560th anniversary of the Siege of Nándorfehérvár/Belgrade. The excellent relations between the two countries, the historic reconciliation process and the situation of the Hungarian community in Serbia as well as that of the Serbian community in Hungary were also discussed in the meeting. During his stay in Serbia, Mr. Kövér also made a visit to Székelykeve/Skorenovac and Hertelendyfalva/Vojlovica, which are the two southernmost Hungarian towns in the Carpathian Basin.



### The Coordination Body of Transcarpathian Aid is established

In order to ensure the targeted distribution of aid arriving in Transcarpathia to support Hungarians affected by the Ukrainian conflict, a coordination body named the Coordination Body of Transcarpathian Aid was established in Beregszász/Berehove on 11 April 2015. The constituent assembly of the body was held at the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute and was attended by the leaders of Transcarpathian Hungarian organizations, foreign representations and historical churches. The Consul General of Hungary in Beregszász Endre Szalipszki highlighted at the meeting that it is very important that Hungary pays attention to and seeks to help the Hungarian community of Transcarpathia – which is in the most difficult situation among Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. In order to ensure the efficient distribution of aid sent to the region, local coordination bodies will be established in different towns in Transcarpathia, which will be responsible for listing people in need, and for distributing aid. Also included on the list will be families with one or more members counted among those who have died in action in Eastern Ukraine or among those currently serving there. The members of the assembly adopted a declaration laying down the main goals and tasks of the coordination body.



### Agreement on Hungarian-language vocational training in Croatia signed in Eszék

In the town of Eszék/Osijek in Croatia, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture István Román and the president of the Forum of Hungarian Teachers in Croatia (HMPF) Nándor Csapó signed a theoretical agreement on the development of Hungarian vocational training. As part of the program “2015 – the Year of Hungarian Vocational Education Abroad”, the parties conducted talks regarding the opportunities for vocational training in Croatia. The state secretary added that, at the HMPF's request, educational institutions will also be supported in Croatia, and the Hungarian government will allocate HUF 12.5 million (EUR 40,000) for development purposes. He added that HUF 500 million (1.6 million EUR) will be available this year for the implementation of the program throughout the Carpathian Basin. Mr. Potápi also drew attention to



the transfer scholarship program of the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities abroad, which provides an opportunity for groups consisting of a senior teacher and five students to take part in summer internship at vocational education institutions in Hungary.

