

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

17/2015



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

NPKI | RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD



The Act on Citizenship will not be made stricter

At the annual hearing of the Committee on National Cohesion on Monday, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad and president of the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) Zsolt Semjén declared that he does not see the need to make the Act on Citizenship stricter. The Deputy Prime Minister said that controls may become "harder", although the responsible bodies are already conducting their work very thoroughly. He added that he is definitely against increasing bureaucratic burdens in this field. Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Tamás Wetzel said that almost 720,000 people have already applied for the simplified naturalization procedure and 680,000 people have taken the oath, adding that the process is functioning smoothly. The Deputy State Secretary said that based on the current trends, by the end of the year 800,000 requests may be filed, and that the number of new Hungarian citizens might reach one million by the end of the current government term. Mr. Wetzel said that 25,000 requests have been rejected so far, and the controls are extremely strict in terms of public and national security aspects.

Talking about the situation in Ukraine, Mr. Semjén said that "we have to prepare ourselves for all possible situations regarding support provided to Hungarians living in Transcarpathia." He added that whatever help the Hungarians there may need, they will receive it, since Hungary stands by them.

State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that next year is planned to be the thematic year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad. The state Secretary expressed his hope that the same amount of funding – HUF 500 million (EUR 1.6 million) – will be available for this program as well. Mr. Potápi also said that the newly announced Petőfi Sándor Program – focusing on dispersed Hungarian communities living in the Carpathian Basin and countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy - has so far had 148 applicants. Under the program interns will be sent to dispersed Hungarian communities in order to strengthen the identity of Hungarians living there.



Hearing on the protection of traditional minorities

On Wednesday, EPP Group Members organized a public hearing in the European Parliament on the situation of traditional national minorities. At a press conference held before the hearing, MEP Kinga Gál (Fidesz-KDNP alliance) said that the event is an important step forward in the field, urging the European Parliament to adopt a resolution on the issue, as well as the European Commission to build up a European minority protection system. Speaking at the hearing, MEP József Nagy (Most-Híd) said that the most important aim is to make the EU's member states more tolerant. Mr. Nagy also stressed the importance of the freedom of minority language use, the significance of education in one's mother tongue as the most effective way of learning, and the importance of a predictable and non-discriminatory legal situation. MEP Pál



Csáky (Party of the Hungarian Community/MKP) said that the most serious problem was the lack of a minority protection system, adding that the respective documents of the Council of Europe should be included in the EU's law. MEP Csaba Sógor (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania/RMDSZ) also highlighted that "the European Union should find a solution to the assimilation processes threatening traditional national minorities."



Bretfelean: Bilingual street signs cause conflicts between ethnicities

The commander of the local police of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureș – which is under the authority of the city's local government – has announced that the aim of the Civil Commitment Movement (Cemo) which installed bilingual street signs in the town was to generate ethnic conflict. The police commander stressed that "the Cemo, disregarding the law, is installing bilingual street signs in order to generate conflict between ethnicities in Marosvásárhely". The police commander recalled that on 20 March the volunteers of the movement were caught and fined.

In connection with the case, secretary general of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Péter Kovács said that the RMDSZ considers the action of the local police of Marosvásárhely against bilingual street signs unacceptable. Mr. Kovács added that the local organization of the RMDSZ should provide legal protection for the volunteers who were fined and realize – by political means – that bilingual street signs were installed everywhere in Marosvásárhely.

RMDSZ proposes establishment of a regional alternative electoral threshold

During talks with Romania's President Klaus Iohannis held on Monday, the delegation of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) urged the inclusion of an alternative threshold in the Romanian electoral Act in order to ensure the parliamentary presence of Hungarians living in Romania. This was the third time the President of Romania held consultations with political parties, and the aim of the latest meeting was to discuss issues connected with the planned electoral reform. The representatives of the RMDSZ stressed at the meeting that it would be important to ensure parliamentary mandates not just for those parties and political organizations which receive five percent of the vote at the national level, but also for those which do not reach this level but receive twenty percent of the vote in at least four counties.



István Pásztor remains the president of the VMSZ

At the assembly of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) held on 25 April in Magyarcsernye/Nova Crnja, the current head of the party István Pásztor was re-elected as president of the VMSZ for another four years. Mr. Pásztor was the only



candidate for the presidency of the party, and received 274 votes from the 281 representatives who were present at the assembly. The 50 members of the Council of the VMSZ were also elected at the assembly. Addressing the event, the re-elected president said that the past four years of the alliance can be considered successful. He also added that in the next four years the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians must remain a regional Hungarian party of a peoples' party nature, which represents civic values and is able to "realize cooperation between those members of the Hungarian community in Vojvodina who represent different political views." In five days, the new council will hold its inaugural meeting in which the members of the council's board and the vice-presidents of the VMSZ will be elected.



Hungarian language village and street signs are vandalized in Transcarpathia

Hungarian language town, road and tourist signs have been vandalized and Hungarian flags were torn apart by unknown perpetrators in Ungvár/Uzhhorod and the surrounding municipalities in Transcarpathia. The Ukrainian police has launched an investigation in the case. The perpetrators sprayed black paint over the Hungarian language village signs of Eszeny/Esen', Tiszaásvány/Tysaashvan', Nagydobrony/Velyka Dobron' and Kisdobrony/Mala Dobron'. In Eszeny and Tiszaásvány - both villages located near the Ukrainian-Hungarian border - the unknown perpetrators ripped the Hungarian flag from the local high school building and community center. The Ukrainian language town signs and flags were left intact. The Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) issued a statement condemning the barbaric act, calling on authorities to investigate the case and find the perpetrators. The KMKSZ also filed a criminal complaint in the case. On Monday, the governor of Transcarpathia Vasyl Hubal received the Consul General of Hungary in Ungvár/Uzhhorod in his office in order to discuss the issue. The governor condemned the act of vandalism and promised that the county will do its best to find the perpetrators.

