

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

20/2015



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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The FUEN supports national minorities' efforts for self-governance

The 60th annual congress of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) was held between 14-16 May in the city of Komotini/Gümülcine in Greece. The participants discussed topical questions affecting European nationalities and ethnic minorities, including the problem of ensuring effective political representation for minorities. On the initiative of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP), the MKP, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) and the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP) presented a joint draft resolution on supporting the efforts of Slovakian and Transylvanian Hungarians for self-governance. The FUEN accepted the draft resolution, and called on Romania and Slovakia to "ensure the application of the principle of subsidiarity, regionalism and self-governance, taking into account the principle of lingual and ethnic-based non-discrimination", and to "abstain from any attempt which is aimed at presenting national minorities' efforts for cultural and territorial autonomy for the majority nation as risk factors endangering the territorial integrity of the state concerned."

Kövér: Hungarian communities deserve more

The Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament László Kövér has declared that in many respects Hungary's ability to enforce its interests is worse now than at any time in the past 25 years, since during the period of economic recovery the country chose a way which ran counter to foreign interests. The House Speaker added that "we would like Hungarian communities living in neighboring countries to receive what they are entitled to." Mr. Kövér added that, in this respect, the European Union's attitude towards human rights is somewhat "distorted", since "it pays more attention to the mental health of battery hens than to the protection of the educational and cultural autonomy of national communities." Concerning Hungarians' self-regulation in neighboring countries, the House Speaker mentioned Slovenia and Croatia as positive examples, while criticized Romania and Slovakia, saying that in the latter Hungarians are treated as "a national security risk factor."



Law on the use of flags is adopted

On Wednesday, the Romanian Parliament adopted the draft law on the use of towns and counties' flags, submitted by 42 representatives of the governing Social Democratic Party (PSD). The draft law was adopted with a great majority, receiving 275 votes in favor, 2 votes against and 4 abstentions. The law declares that local governments can choose their own flag as their symbol, but they have to submit it to the government for approval. Flags are approved by a government resolution; their colors and symbols must not violate Romanian national symbols and must not contain the symbols of other states. What can be indicated on the flag is the officially adopted name and crest of the given town. In towns where the ratio of a certain minority constitutes at least twenty percent of the town's population, the name of the



town can also be written in the minority language. However, the name in minority language must be of the same font size and type, and must be placed under the Romanian name.

Hungarian organizations' reactions to the law on flags were different. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) expressed its pleasure that the law improves the current unfortunate situation, while the Szekler National Council (SNZT) expressed its strong condemnation. The head of the SZNT Balázs Izsák called on local governments not to adopt their own flags and crests until they must be approved by the Romanian Government.

The National Liberal Party does not support Szeklerland's autonomy

According to the co-chair of Romania's National Liberal Party (PNL) Alina Gorghiu, the issue of Szeklerland's autonomy cannot be a subject to negotiation during the talks with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ). Mr. Gorghiu said that the question of making concessions in the issue of autonomy does not even arise. He added that if the RMDSZ will submit its draft law on Szeklerland's autonomy to the Parliament, they will certainly vote against it. The co-chair of the PNL added that laws in Romania are favorable for national minorities and meet the European norms. He said that if he had to explain this to European partners, it would be enough to mention the fact that beside the Hungarian community, the members of further 18 minorities living in Romania are represented in the Romanian Parliament, moreover, Romania's president also belongs to a national minority, both from a religious and ethnic point of view.

Meanwhile, a survey published by the CSCI public opinion poll on Wednesday suggests that 72 percent of Romanians is strongly against Hungarian autonomy, while 30 percent of them are definitely anti-Hungarian. This anti-Hungarian attitude is reflected in the fact that Romanians do not trust the RMDSZ, strongly oppose Hungarian autonomy and even Hungarian statues. As a result, Romanians neither trust Hungary. 52 percent of the respondents said that they do not trust Hungary at all, while 25 of them shows little confidence towards this country. Only 13 of the people interviewed said that trusted Hungary, while the percent of those who show absolute confidence is only 3 percent.



Viktor Orbán holds talks with István Pásztor

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and President of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor continued their meetings in Parliament on the economic, cultural and social development of Vojvodina's Hungarian community. During the talks there was discussion of the establishment of a Vojvodina land fund, which would be aimed at helping Hungarian farmers. Concerning the social field, the parties also talked about the establishment of a peri-urban and farm system. The Press Chief of



the Prime Minister said that Mr. Pásztor will soon submit to Mr. Orbán a proposal on the development of sport in Vojvodina.



Further support for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia

At an event held at the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute in Beregszász/Berehove on the 10th anniversary of the Zrínyi Ilona Scholarship Program (established by the Hármashalom Foundation), State Secretary for Administrative Affairs at the Ministry of Agriculture Dr. Attila István Simon said that the Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin will not be saved by political programs, but the interest of students living in the kin-state, the organizational skills of teachers, the donations of Hungary's civil organizations, the ambitious plans of Hungarians living abroad, therefore, the strength of the civil society is what can save them. During his stay in Transcarpathia, the state secretary signed several agreements of support worth 21 million HUF (EUR 68,000) with four Transcarpathian Hungarian civil organizations. Mr. Simon attended another event in which 400 Hungarian teachers of Transcarpathia received scholarships from kin-state foundations. Speaking at the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute, the state secretary said that the present financial support shows that the Hungarian Government, including Hungary's Ministry of Agriculture, pays particular attention to Transcarpathia.

