

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

21/2015



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE  
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN  
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

NPKI | RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR HUNGARIAN  
COMMUNITIES ABROAD



## Árpád János Potápi: Minorities should decide for themselves

State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi addressed a conference entitled “The challenges of the European protection of minorities”, organized by the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI) and attended by the representatives of the Federal Union of European Minorities (FUEN). The State Secretary said that the Hungarian government considers the FUEN an important player in asserting minority rights, which draws the attention of decision-makers to the unresolved questions of national minorities. He said that Hungary welcomes a declaration adopted a few years ago at the 60th congress of the FUEN, in which the organization called on Romania and Slovakia to apply the best practices of cultural and territorial autonomy operating in the European Union, taking into account the historic, cultural, linguistic, religious and traditional values of regions. Speaking at the conference, the President of the FUEN Hans Heinrich Hansen said that minorities which do not have educational institutions might soon disappear. He added that the system of educational institutions is often subject to economic stress, while minority interests and rights are neglected. The head of the FUEN stressed that we must realize that citizens have a say in politics, and must strive to enable them to decide on their own issues.

## Government work affecting Hungarian communities abroad to be coordinated by a working committee

At a press conference held in Budapest on Thursday, Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office János Lázár announced that his ministry has established a working committee aimed at harmonizing government work related to Hungarian communities living abroad. The minister said that they held a meeting at which they discussed the current demographic and sociological situation of Hungarians living outside Hungary, examining under what conditions Hungarians abroad live, 25 years after the fall of communism. Mr. Lázár added that the aim of the meeting was to summarize the results of the Hungarian government’s aid policy over the past 25 years. The minister added that the participants at the meeting agreed that the simplified naturalization procedure has proved to be a huge success. He added that the Hungarian government has also decided that the focus of the new aid system will be encouraging parents to raise children and education abroad.

## State Secretary: Hungarian communities abroad must be supported

Speaking on Hungarian public TV station M1, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that Hungarian communities living abroad must be supported in order to strengthen their Hungarian identity. The State Secretary added that a comprehensive survey on the situation of Hungarians living outside Hungary has been completed recently, which can serve as a good basis for the formation of a new direction in policy for Hungarian communities abroad. Mr. Potápi added that there are symbolic and sociopolitical policies which should be extended to young people living abroad, while the economic strengthening of these communities



is also very important. The State Secretary said that secondary and higher education must be supported, as well as vocational education abroad. He stressed that the most important aim is to halt demographic decline.



### President János Áder attends Pentecost pilgrimage in Csíksomlyó

Similar to previous years, hundreds of thousands of people have taken part in the Pentecost Pilgrimage in Transylvania's Csíksomlyó (Sumuleu Ciuc). The open-air mass was led by the Archbishop of Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia György Jakubinyi, who called on pilgrims to remain loyal to their faith, homeland and mother tongue. The event was also attended by the President of Hungary János Áder and First Lady Anita Herczegh. The President – who was taking part in the pilgrimage for the third time – said that everyone should “pay heed” to the message of loyalty heard at the sermon. The President said that “The sermon we heard was a message of loyalty. Loyalty to faith, loyalty to the homeland, the loyalty of being a part of a nation and the loyalty of keeping one’s native language”. “It would be difficult to add anything to this: I think this message is enough for us for today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow – we should spend Pentecost with these thoughts in mind and should pass them on to our relatives and friends.”

### Romanian parliamentary parties have agreed on the adoption of an alternative threshold

The head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen has informed the Hungarian news agency MTI that the leaders of Romanian parliamentary parties have agreed on the basic principles of the new election law; as a result, even the smallest counties will have two senators and four representatives. Mr. Kelemen added that the parties have also agreed on the adoption of an alternative parliamentary threshold, therefore political organizations which receive twenty percent of the vote in at least four counties will win a mandate in Parliament, even if they do not reach five percent at a national level. The head of the RMDSZ added that citizens living abroad will have an opportunity to cast their votes personally in electoral districts, after pre-registration.

### The case of the Székely Mikó High School is brought to the European Court of Human Rights

Speaking at a press conference in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca, the Bishop of the Transylvanian Hungarian Church District Béla Kató announced that the church has applied to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of the re-nationalization of the building of the Székely Mikó High School of Sepsiszentgyörgy/ Sfântu Gheorghe. The Bishop said he was not pleased that they have to apply for legal remedy against Romania at a court outside Romania, but there are no other solutions left to settle the issue of the Székely Mikó High School. One of the lawyers who prepared the court



records, associate professor Emőd Veress, said that the fact they are trying to prove is that the school building was re-nationalized in an unlawful way, and Romania violated the church's right to property.

In Romania on 26 November 2014, a final ruling was adopted in the restitution case of the Székely Mikó High School of Sepsiszentgyörgy, which caused international concern. This ruling – despite some minor corrections – confirms the verdict of the first instance, declaring the members of the restitution committee guilty and renationalizing the school building. The decision of the court calls into question the emergence of basic democratic values and the rule of law in Romania.



### A law on statues to be adopted in Serbia

The Serbian newspaper Večernje Novosti has reported that, according to a new law which will regulate the use of statues in Serbia, no monuments or statues can be erected which “are offensive to others”. As a result, no statues or monuments can be erected to commemorate Hungarian soldiers in Vojvodina who died in the First World War. The report points out that the new law will prevent the erection of statues “offending religious or national emotions, historical facts or monuments violating public morals or advertising fascist, chauvinist or separatist ideas.” In the future, the erection of statues and monuments will be supervised by Serbia's Ministry of Labor. An associate of the ministry, Dragan Popović, said that the new law will provide an opportunity, for example, to reject requests from Germany to erect monuments to German soldiers in Serbia. Mr. Popović added that the situation is the same for soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.



### The KMKSZ strives to establish a territorial-administrative unit uniting Hungarians living in a bloc

In light of the current administrative reform in Ukraine, at a meeting held on Saturday in Beregszász/Berehove, the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) discussed opportunities for establishing a territorial-administrative unit uniting the towns in which Transcarpathian Hungarians live in a bloc. Head of the KMKSZ and member of the Ukrainian parliament László Brenzovics said that the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia must endure the current difficult situation, and must make use of the opportunities the current Ukrainian administrative reforms provide for national minorities. The participants at the meeting outlined the potential borders of the planned Hungarian district on a map, in which the ratio of Hungarians would constitute 70 percent (out of the 170,000 people in the district, the number of Hungarians would be 115,000).