

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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Árpád János Potápi receives interns of the ReConnect Hungary program

State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi received the interns of the ReConnect Hungary Program (young people of Hungarian descent, living in the USA and Canada) at the House of Hungarians (Magyarság Háza) in Budapest. Mr. Potápi expressed his pleasure that the interns have not forgotten their Hungarian roots and are participating in the program. The state secretary added that while in recent years the program had only 12–15 participants, support from the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad has seen this number double. He also expressed the hope that the number of young people taking part in the program will increase further in future years. Mr. Potápi stressed that the two-week journey offered by the program is an excellent opportunity for second and third generation Hungarians living in North America to strengthen their personal Hungarian identity through connection to Hungary, its culture and heritage. He added that according to plans, a Hungarian Emigration and Diaspora Center will soon open in the House of Hungarians, aimed at presenting the history of the Hungarian diaspora; therefore those young people who will come to Hungary next year under the ReConnect Hungary Program will have an opportunity to visit it.

Owen Pataki – son of former Republican governor of New York State and first-ever presidential candidate of Hungarian descent George Pataki – is also among the participants in the 2015 program.

The ReConnect Hungary program is similar to the “birthright” programs of Israel, Armenia and Ireland (the term “birthright” can be defined as a right acquired by birth). The basic idea was introduced seven years ago by former governor of New York George Pataki at a Hungarian Human Rights Foundation event, based on an idea of his daughter, Allison Pataki Levy.



Hunor Kelemen: the situation of Hungarians in Transylvania is not improving

Speaking at the 3rd open university in Slovakia’s Martos/Martovce, in a forum on policy for Hungarian communities abroad, the President of the Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen reported on the most important recent events and major aims concerning Hungarians in Romania. Mr. Kelemen said that the two most important events of the past year have been the election of the new president of Romania Klaus Iohannis, and the RMDSZ leaving the government. The head of the RMDSZ stressed that the past 25 years have not been enough for Romania to follow the western model in implementing the rule of law. He added that this fact is proved by the constant violation of current laws. Mr. Kelemen said that “under the guise of fighting corruption, the Romanian government is engaged in the political character assassination of Hungarian representatives”, referring to judicial proceedings launched against Transylvanian Hungarian politicians. The President of the RMDSZ said that another feature of the current situation in Romania is its draft strategy on



public order and public safety, which defines demands for ethnic autonomy as a threat to public safety.



3rd Open University in Martos

One of the largest summer events of the Hungarian community in Slovakia, the 3rd Open University in Martos/Martovce, was held from 8–12 July. The event started on Wednesday, with the participation of the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament László Kövér, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi and the President of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi, who discussed the most important events of the past year in the field of Hungary's domestic, foreign and kin-state policy.

Evaluating the past period from the viewpoint of Hungarian communities abroad, Mr. Potápi said that with the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the adoption of the simplified naturalization procedure, the Hungarian government has created the symbolic framework for the field. He added that this framework should be extended by economic policy tools, and this aim is served very well by programs like the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program, the Petőfi Program and the program "2015 – the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad".

On the closing day of the open university a forum was held on policy for Hungarian communities abroad. The forum was attended by the leaders of Hungarian communities outside Hungary: the President of the Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ), the President of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi and Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Tamás Wetzsel. The party leaders evaluated the most crucial current events concerning their communities and outlined their most important aims for the future. The participants in the forum agreed that the interests of every Hungarian community abroad would be served by the MKP winning representation in the Slovakian parliament.

Speaking at the forum, the head of the MKP József Berényi condemned President of Slovakia Andrej Kiska's attitude towards minorities in Slovakia. He added that Mr. Kiska does not consider the Benes Decrees a problem, and has so far done nothing for the Hungarian community in Slovakia.



Árpád János Potápi: Relations between the KMKSZ and the UMDSZ might be restored

State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi is working on the restoration of relations between the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and the Hungarian Democratic Federation in Ukraine (UMDSZ) which deteriorated some twenty years ago. Speaking at a press conference held to inform the press about the latest developments in



Hungary's policy for Hungarian communities abroad, the state secretary said that he had attended the graduation ceremony of the Ungvár/Uzhhorod National University on Tuesday; after the event he met the presidents of the KMKSZ and UMDSZ, with whom joint efforts are being made to restore cooperation between the two organizations for this fall's municipal elections in Ukraine, and with a view to resuming dialogue between them and resolving tensions. Mr. Potápi added that an amendment to the local election law in Ukraine might be adopted next week, after which he would hold further talks with the presidents of the two organizations.

Mr. Potápi also talked about the "2015 – the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad" program. He said that HUF 50 million (EUR 159,000) will be allocated to the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, which will be spent on building a physics laboratory, implementing IT development projects and publishing educational material. He added that the programs are based on plans developed by the organization of Hungarian teachers in Transcarpathia.

Shootout in Western Ukraine's Mukachevo

On Saturday a shootout took place near a sports center in Western Ukraine's Mukachevo/Munkács, between members of the far-right group Pravy Sector (Right Sector), the security guard of a Transcarpathian member of the Ukrainian parliament Mykhaylo Lanyo and Ukrainian police arriving at the scene. At least two men died and several people were injured in the shootout. The chaotic shooting started near the Antares sports center, owned by Mr. Lanyo's family. A group of around 17 people – defining themselves as members of the Pravy Sector – wanted to break into the territory of the center, but were opposed by Mr. Lanyo's security guards. One of the security guards was injured in the shootout. Soon the police and the Ukrainian Security Service arrived at the scene.

Speaking in Tiszaújlak/Vylok at one of the largest annual events of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community, held to mark the anniversary of the first victory of the Rákóczi freedom fight, the head of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and member of the Ukrainian parliament László Brenzovics said that the news and reports about the tragic events in Mukachevo are aimed at frightening people living in Transcarpathia, "but we are not afraid to be Transcarpathian Hungarians". The several hundred participants at the event held a minute's silence in honor of the victims of the shootout in Mukachevo.