

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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## The aim of the Petőfi Sándor Program is to strengthen Hungarians' identity

State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi has said that the aim of the Petőfi Sándor Program is to strengthen the identity of dispersed Hungarian communities and support those young people who want to relate to Hungarian culture, language and history. The state secretary announced that the program will officially start in the middle of August, while the one-week training of the interns taking part in the program – of whom 18 come from neighboring countries – started on Monday. During the training course, the interns will attend lectures introducing the policy for Hungarian communities abroad as well as the social, economic, cultural and political life of Hungarian communities abroad. The target areas for the program will include the Carpathian Basin: Austria, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Southern Poland and the Romanian region of Moldavia.

## Minority joint committees are important forums of policy for Hungarian communities abroad

Ministerial commissioner responsible for neighborhood policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ferenc Kalmár has said that minority joint committees are important forums at which problems and controversial issues can be discussed with representatives from neighboring countries. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán appointed Mr. Kalmár co-president of joint committees which are fighting for the interests of Hungarian communities abroad. As a result of this decision, the lead role in negotiations with Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine and Slovakia is once again “in one pair of hands”. Mr. Kalmár said that minority joint committees with six neighboring countries were established on the basis of framework and basic treaties. Concerning the autonomy efforts of Hungarian communities, the ministerial commissioner said that Hungarians abroad have never put forward demands which are unparalleled in Europe, referring to the example of Italy's South Tyrol and Finland's Åland Islands.



## Romanian university considers launching Hungarian-language program in medicine and pharmaceuticals

The University of Nagyvárad/Oradea (a Romanian city near the border with Hungary) is considering launching Hungarian-language programs in medicine and pharmaceuticals, according to the news site Ebihoreanul.ro. The article says that the Faculty's dean Florian Bodog has been considering this possibility to increase the number of the university's students, targeting Hungarian students living on both sides of the Romanian border. Mr. Bodog – who is also a senator in Romania's Social Democratic Party (PSD) – said that through cooperation with Hungarian medical universities in Debrecen, Szeged and Budapest, the Nagyvárad faculty already has



Hungarian professors (living either in Nagyvárad or invited from Hungary), and the University of Szeged has already offered to provide help to launch the Hungarian-language program in medicine. Mr. Bodog said that the process of accreditation will probably take one year, and if the idea is approved by the decision-making bodies of the university, Hungarian-language tuition could start in the fall semester of 2016 at the earliest.



### 70th anniversary of the adoption of Beneš decrees

Seventy years ago, on 2 August 1945, the Government of Czechoslovakia issued the so-called 33rd Beneš Decree, which proclaimed the collective guilt of people of German and Hungarian nationality in World War II, depriving them of their fundamental rights and property. The Government of Czechoslovakia, which was striving to create a pure Slavic state, deported three million Germans from the country. In order to eliminate the ethnic Hungarian community in Czechoslovakia, 36,000 people – who were Hungarian citizens before 1938 – were expelled, the lands and houses of Hungarians living in Pozsony/Bratislava, Kassa/ Košice and Komárom/Komarno were expropriated by the state, and about 40,000–45,000 Hungarians were deported to the Sudetenland. As a result of the population exchange agreement concluded with the Hungarian government, 73,273 Slovaks left Hungary and 89,660 Hungarians were deported from Slovakia from 1947–1949. After the fall of communism, neither Czechoslovakia nor – since 1993 – the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic have put on the agenda the withdrawal of the Beneš Decrees and the return of confiscated assets; therefore the Beneš Decrees are still formally in force.

### The MKP and the SaS might enter into coalition

The SaS (Freedom and Solidarity party) and the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) have held talks about potential cooperation during the elections. A coalition seems acceptable for both parties. Details will be discussed later, since the parties are currently waiting for the results of an opinion poll prepared for internal use. It was the SaS which proposed launching a joint list with the MKP. This potential cooperation would be a “technical coalition”. The parties’ aim is to win seats in Parliament, but they would form separate fractions after the elections. If the parties reach an agreement, they will probably have separate election campaign programs. Part of the agreement would be that the parties do not cooperate with the Smer party (Direction – Social Democracy). Current support for the MKP is at about 4.5–5 percent, therefore the party leaders believe that it would be risky to run alone, and a potential coalition with the SaS provides greater safety. However, a further important question is whether the voters of the two parties will support this cooperation: Slovak SaS voters might not support a joint list with Hungarians, while radical MKP voters might also turn away from the party.



### **“It is still dangerous to speak in Hungarian in Temerin”**

Árpád Horváth, one of the young Hungarians who were imprisoned in 2005 for beating a Serbian man in Temerin, has said that the court decision 10 years ago still intimidates the Hungarian community in Serbia. Speaking at a youth camp held in Kiskunmajsa on Saturday, Mr. Horváth said that he was nineteen years old when his sentence to ten years in prison was ratified. His co-defendants were István Máriás (sentenced to fifteen years), Zsolt Illés (thirteen years), and Zoltán Szakáll and József Uracs (eleven and a half years each). Mr. Horváth said that their trial was concluded within an unusually short period of time, and three of the five are still in prison. He added that “It is still dangerous to walk in the center of Temerin at night and speak in Hungarian.”



### **The KMKSZ protests against unlawful methods during military mobilization**

The Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) has issued a statement protesting unlawful methods being employed during military mobilization in Ukraine in recent weeks. The KMKSZ is drawing the authorities’ attention to the fact that, according to Ukrainian law, military call-ups may only be delivered at the homes or workplaces of men eligible for military service. The KMKSZ adds that delivering military call-ups at street checkpoints, border crossing-points or on transport vehicles (e.g. trains) is unlawful. The association stresses that the KMKSZ supports full compliance with legal requirements, and demands that military call-ups are only delivered to those men who are eligible for military service according to the criteria laid down in the law on military mobilization.

