

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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## Zoltán Balog: in addition to building networks, face to face meetings are also necessary

Addressing the closing gala of “Kultivál” – the Carpathian Basin cultural youth festival – in Romania’s Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca, Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog said that in addition to building networks (which is the “magic word” of the 21st century), face-to-face meetings and contacts are also very important. The festival, which was part of the series of events “Cluj Napoca – the Youth Capital of Europe”, was attended by young artists from six regions: Transylvania, Slovakia, Transcarpathia, Slovenia, Vojvodina and Hungary. Speaking at the event, the Minister also touched upon the issue of emigration by young people. He said that “There is no sense in dissuading young people from trying their luck abroad. Instead, we should create conditions which attract young people home after they have spent a certain amount of time in other countries. At the same time, those young people who decide to stay at home should be provided with opportunities which ensure a better life for them than that of their parents’ generation.”

The Kultivál festival, organized by the Transylvanian Hungarian Public Education Association (EMKE), is the continuation of the travelling festival named “Carpathian Basin Hungarian Cultural Days”. This year the festival – which has been organized every year since 2004 with the exception of the past few years – was held in the spirit of youth festivals with respect to the venue, Kolozsár.

## The renovated Reformed Church in Kolozsvár’s Farkas Street has been inaugurated

The Reformed Church in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca’s Farkas Street (the largest Gothic single-nave hall church in South-Eastern Europe), which has recently been renovated with the financial support of the European Union, was inaugurated on Sunday as part of a thanksgiving church service. On behalf of the Hungarian government, the event was attended by Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog. Speaking at the ceremony, the Minister said that due to 21st century renovations, the church is now in better state than it was 40, 100 or 200 years ago. Mr. Balog stressed in his speech that the combination of tradition and innovation is the most important task of the church, of Hungarians and Romanians as well. The Minister highlighted that the permanence of the church might contribute to the permanence of the community as well. The Bishop of the Transylvanian Reformed Church Diocese Béla Kató said that the institutions of Hungarians in Kolozsvár are the places where they can really feel at home; therefore they should build new institutions every year and renovate the old ones.

## Romanian ambassador to Budapest is summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

On Monday the Romanian foreign ministry summoned a Hungarian embassy official over remarks the Hungarian ambassador to Bucharest Botond Zákonyi made about



Hungarian-Romanian relations. Mr. Zákonyi said in an interview published in the daily Romania Libera on Monday that bilateral relations depended in part on infrastructure cooperation, but in this area the Romanian side “fails to demonstrate sufficient goodwill.” The Hungarian ambassador mentioned the Szeged-Arad gas pipeline and its planned upgrade, which would enable two-directional gas supplies. Currently gas only flows in the direction of Romania. Mr. Zákonyi said Romanian authorities should create the conditions for the upgrade to go ahead. The ambassador added that an important project to link ten roads either side of the border has also stalled. According to the statement of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Romania expressed disagreement over Ambassador Botond Zákonyi’s general description of bilateral relations between their countries. Speaking to the all-news channel Romania TV live on Monday evening, the country’s prime minister Victor Ponta accused Hungary, which is already subject to “regular criticism” from European countries and the United States, of “instigating” against Romania. On 11 August 2015 State Secretary at Hungary’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Levente Magyar summoned to his office Romanian ambassador to Budapest Victor Micula, because of statements made by the Prime Minister of Romania Victor Ponta on 10 August on the all-news channel Romania TV; in these the Prime Minister had made “unacceptable accusations” against Hungary. These claims show that the “Romanian Prime Minister is yet again seeking to use anti-Hungarian agitation in order to divert attention from the internal political crisis in his country, in which members of his government have been repeatedly charged with wrongdoing and sentenced in court.” The State Secretary said that “outbursts by the Romanian government” against Hungary have become seriously detrimental to the development of Hungarian-Romanian bilateral ties and neighborly relations.

Hungarian parties in Romania unanimously condemned the reactions of the Romanian foreign ministry and Prime Minister Victor Ponta concerning Ambassador Zákonyi’s statements. The party leader of the senate of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Béla Markó said that the current tension between Romania and Hungary reminded him of the 1990s. He added that regarding the current situation – the Ukrainian crisis and the issue of immigration – neither Romania nor Hungary is interested in a conflict, adding that “it is not a good idea to generate an artificial conflict.” Mr. Markó added that there is no dialog between Romania and Hungary, although cooperation would be in the interest of both countries.



### József Berényi: we should follow the example of King Saint Stephen

Speaking at a Saint Stephen’s Day celebration in Slovakia’s Vajka/Vojka and Dunajom on Saturday, the president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi said that the Hungarian community in Slovakia should follow the example of King Saint Stephen, since he found the means for permanence. At the celebration, which was held next to the monument of Saint Stephen erected ten years ago, the



head of the MKP said that “we must not forget (even when celebrating) that in Slovakia there are serious problems in preserving Hungarian identity, the permanence of the local community and its economic development.” Mr. Berényi emphasized that Hungarians in Slovakia should follow the example of St. Stephen and find their own means of permanence in Slovakia within an institutional framework which can halt the population decrease of the community and make possible the economic development of the region.



### Minister of Justice László Trócsányi calls for unity among Vojvodina Hungarians

Speaking at a Saint Stephen's Day celebration in Serbia's Palics/Palic, Minister of Justice László Trócsányi called for unity within the Hungarian community in Vojvodina. The Minister said that it is a fundamental interest of Hungary that Hungarians living beyond the borders live in unity with one another. The Minister also touched upon the issue of Serbia's EU integration, and the measures taken in this process affecting national minorities, as well as the phenomenon of emigration threatening the Hungarian community in Vojvodina and the migratory pressure affecting the European Union, also felt in Hungary and Serbia. Speaking about current political issues in Vojvodina, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor laid emphasis on the handling of migration crisis. He said that more and more European politicians agree that solutions must be found to this problem, and more and more of them say that they are not willing to accept a huge, vulnerable and pitiable mass of people in their countries, who also pose a risk. Mr. Pásztor stressed that the reason Hungary is able to handle the problem of immigration decisively is that it has all the means necessary for “representing the nation with dignity.”



### State Secretary Károly Czibere inquires about the social situation of Hungarians in Transcarpathia

Taking part at a distribution of bread in Transcarpathia's Beregszász/Berehove, State Secretary responsible for social affairs and inclusion at the Ministry of Human Capacities Károly Czibere said that the Hungarian government will never abandon the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, and it will always stand by Hungarians when they are in need. During his one-day visit to Transcarpathia, the state secretary inquired about the social situation of Hungarians in the region, and held talks with the Bishop of the Transcarpathian Reformed Church Diocese Sándor Zán Fábíán, the president of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and member of the Ukrainian parliament László Brenzovics, and the mayor of Beregszász Zoltán Babják. Mr. Czibere made a visit to the free kitchen in the town, which has been



operating for one and a half months, and took part in distribution of bread organized by the Reformed Church. Speaking at the event, the state secretary said that with his visit he would like to express the active solidarity of the Hungarian Government and kin-state towards the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. Mr. Czibere added that the Hungarian government made a just and very important decision when it decided to offer state-level, organized support for Hungarians living in Transcarpathia.