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Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó and President of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen hold talks

Holding talks in the context of migration crisis, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó and the president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen discussed the situation of the Hungarian community in Transylvania, as well as Romanian-Hungarian relations. Speaking after the talks, Mr. Kelemen said he had informed the foreign minister that instances of increased Romanian nationalism and xenophobia in Romania are always worrying. Mr. Kelemen stressed that they have no interest in a deterioration of Romanian-Hungarian relations. The head of the RMDSZ added that since migrants have not yet appeared in Romania, the strong xenophobia is currently directed against Hungarians, and this phenomenon worries the RMDSZ. On Wednesday Mr. Kelemen also had talks with Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén. After the talks he said that he regularly holds talks with Hungarian government politicians, and in every meeting he discusses joint issues and problems with them. Mr. Kelemen added that these two meetings were in line with the usual consultations between the RMDSZ and the Hungarian government.



Protest in Révkomárom against developments unfavorably affecting Hungarian-language education in Slovakia

About one thousand people participated in a protest held in Slovakia's Révkomárom/Komárno initiated by the educational petition committee and supported by several professional and civil society organizations, the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) and Most-Híd. The participants at the event were protesting against developments unfavorably affecting Hungarian-language education in Slovakia. The protest was caused by some amendments to the Slovak Act on Education, which entered into force in September. One of these amendments is aimed at regulating the number of children in classes, determining the compulsory minimum number of children in a class, and thus endangering the existence of small rural schools. This regulation affects one hundred Hungarian schools in Slovakia, which constitute more than one third of the 261 Hungarian-language educational institutions in the country. Another cause of the protest is the fact that in June the Slovak Minister of Education rejected the demands of a petition which was submitted in May and signed by 26,000 people, aimed at increasing the number of mother-tongue reading and writing classes, as well as the number of optional classes, and adding the subject of Hungary's history to school curricula. The participants in the protest held in the local community center arrived from almost every region of Slovakia inhabited by Hungarians. The event was addressed by the representatives of professional, civil society and political organizations. Sándor Fibi, one of the initiators of the educational petition submitted in the spring, welcomed the participants, recalling their demands, the steps taken so far by the Slovakian Ministry of Education and the consequences of those steps. Mr. Fibi stressed that "all of these measures are



conscious steps in accordance with the realization of plans aimed at creating a nation state.” Speaking at the event, the head of the MKP József Berényi said that over the past 25 years, “the everyday life of the local Hungarian community has been about trying to stop efforts to dismantle Hungarian education coming from those in power.” Mr. Berényi added that those efforts have not changed, only the methods have become more sophisticated.



Hungary and Serbia seek even closer cooperation

“Hungary and Serbia are seeking to establish even closer economic cooperation, because in challenging times the value of friendship increases”, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said in Vojvodina’s Zenta/Senta, where he and Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic were opening a new automotive cable manufacturing plant built by Tisza Automotive Ltd., a member of the Hungarian Tisza Cipő Group. Mr. Szijjártó said that “Hungarian-Serbian friendship has gained in value during the course of the migrant crisis, but it is also important that this friendship should include everyday expressions: investment projects that have been realized through joint effort”. He added that “Joint projects contribute to enabling Central Europe to remain the engine of the European economy”. The company currently employs 490 people, and the new plant will mean the creation of a further 510 new jobs by the end of the year. Serbian prime minister Aleksandar Vucic said “he was certain that Hungary and Serbia have a very bright joint future.”

The EP examines the situation of national councils in Serbia

The president of the Hungarian National Council (MNT) Jenő Hajnal has announced that the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Subcommittee on Human Rights travelled to Serbia and Kosovo on 23-24 September. The members of the delegations met the representatives of civil society organizations and the media, and the leaders of state bodies. A group from the delegation led by the vice-president of the Subcommittee on Human Rights MEP László Tóké had talks with the presidents and representatives of Serbia’s national councils. During the talks, the leaders of the national councils informed the delegation of the current problems in the field of minority education and information. The parties also discussed the current state of the minority action plan (the preparation of which has been slower than expected), as well as tasks concerning culture and the official use of minority languages.





Hungarian organizations in Transcarpathia protest against the unfavorable restructuring of electoral districts

The Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDSZ) have issued a joint statement protesting against a decision by the Central Election Committee of Ukraine. The decision restructures the electoral districts of Bereg County (the only county of Ukraine in which Hungarians live in a majority), thus placing Hungarians at a disadvantage in the approaching local government elections. In their statement, the KMKSZ and the UMDSZ expressed their outrage at this decision, stating that “the decision lacks any logic, and is aimed at the prevention of opportunities for the Hungarian community (which constitutes 12 per cent of Transcarpathia’s population) being elected to the Transcarpathian Regional Council. The members of the two Hungarian organizations also criticized the fact that the planned electoral districts do not even neighbor each other.

In its statement published in connection with the issue, the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad described the decision of the Central Election Committee as regrettable. The restructuring of the electoral districts of Bereg County – which affects Hungarians living in Transcarpathia the most – makes no sense, as the settlements of the four newly-established electoral districts do not even neighbor each other. Establishing new district borders may negatively influence the chance of representatives from Hungarian communities being elected to the Transcarpathian Regional Council at a time when the two Hungarian parties could jointly represent the interests of Hungarians in a unified way. The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad considers it particularly important that a democratic state in the process of approaching Europe observes European norms and the basic rights of minorities to assert their interests.

The Hungarian-Ukrainian Department of the Interparliamentary Union holds its first session in Transcarpathia

During its first session in Transcarpathia’s Ungvár/Uzhhorod on Friday, the members of the Hungarian-Ukrainian Department of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) discussed current questions related to relations between Hungary and Ukraine, and those of Transcarpathia. The head of the Transcarpathian Regional Council Volodymyr Chubirko received the delegation – consisting of 14 members of the Hungarian National Assembly and the Ukrainian Parliament – in his office. Mr. Chubirko asked the MEPs of the two countries to take an active role in the promotion of the building of the planned new border-crossing points on the Ukrainian-Hungarian border, and in the infrastructure development of the existing ones. Speaking to the Hungarian news agency MTI after the session, the head of the foreign affairs committee of the Hungarian National Assembly Zsolt Németh said that the Hungarian-Ukrainian Department of the IPU has started its work with energy, adding that the department will hold sessions twice a year. Mr. Németh said he finds it



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extremely important that the issue of Ukraine does not fall out of the focus of international public opinion due to the current migration crisis.