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Zoltán Balog: We have a joint responsibility for Hungarian communities abroad

Speaking at his annual hearing at the session of the Committee on National Cohesion of the Hungarian National Assembly, Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog stressed the importance of joint responsibility for Hungarian communities living abroad. The Minister said that the Hungarian government would like to have a unified strategy for the Carpathian Basin in different professional fields, making it possible for the aspects of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad to be present in different policy decisions. Mr. Balog also reported on the measures aimed at supporting Hungarians living in Transcarpathia, highlighting that the current crisis in Ukraine demands reaction from the Hungarian government on a daily basis. The Minister added that Hungary's most important allies in humanitarian aid provision are churches and their charity organizations. Mr. Balog also said that in January 2016 a HUF 400 million (EUR 1.3 million) new scholarship system will be launched, which is aimed at supporting Hungarian students living in the Carpathian Basin. He added that this financial resource will be made available to 11 Hungarian-language higher educational institutions abroad, which will be responsible for implementation of the program.

Committee for economic development and municipalities of the Hungarian Standing Conference holds its session

On Monday, the Committee for economic development and municipalities of the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) held its session at the House of Hungarians (Magyarság Háza) in Budapest. The session was opened by State Secretary for Economic Regulation István Lepsényi, who said that the Hungarian government is committed to the development of border regions, since a key aim is that a unified economic area is created in the Carpathian Basin. Speaking at the event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that in 2015 the development of vocational education was a priority field of Hungary's education policy, therefore this development direction should also be followed in Hungarian communities abroad. Mr. Potápi added that under this thematic program several vocational arts buildings and workshops have been inaugurated or developed, and various mobility scholarship programs have been launched.

Conference on Hungarian-language education in Slovakia

At a conference organized by the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NKPI) and the Rákóczi Association on the situation of Hungarian-language education in Slovakia, State Secretary for Public Education Judit Czunyiné Bertalan emphasized the importance of the preservation of Hungarian schools in Slovakia. The State Secretary praised the history of the Hungarian education system – which is more than one thousand years old – and said that Hungarian schools are the cradle of the nation. At the same time she added that schools are where the Hungarian nation



in the Carpathian Basin can be preserved, stressing that education is also an issue of national strategy. Speaking at the event, the president of the Hungarian Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee Zsolt Németh said that the Slovakian government cannot close Hungarian schools against the will of the Hungarian community in Slovakia. He added that this is why it is especially important that the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) has representatives in the Slovakian parliament, since this is the party which makes the fight for the survival of Hungarian schools a political topic. Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the supervision of cross-border investments Dr. István Grezsa quoted the Hungarian Constitution, which states that “Hungary bears responsibility for the fate of every Hungarian.” Mr. Grezsa also stressed that negative tendencies in Hungarian-language education in Slovakia might have catastrophic consequences.

The president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi said that the fight against Hungarian schools in Slovakia is not new. Mr. Berényi stressed that there is no Hungarian representation in the Slovakian parliament, and this must be changed, since “for the first time since 1920, it seems that if the relevant law is not amended, Hungarians will not be able to protect their schools.”

Apartments for doctors are handed over in Sepsiszentgyörgy

In Transylvania’s Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe on Wednesday, new apartments for doctors next to the Fogolyán Kristóf Hospital were handed over, the construction of which was supported by the Hungarian government. Speaking at the handover ceremony, the head of the Studium-Prospero Foundation (which had ordered construction of the apartments) Levente Vass said that the building – which consists of three one-room apartments and three two-room apartments with all modern conveniences – will be used for maximum periods of four years each by young doctors who move back to the town and work in the public sphere. Speaking at the event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the Hungarian government supported the project with HUF 105 million (EUR 337,000). The State Secretary said that “we must create prospects for those young people who study in their homeland and want to stay there.” He added that “We must provide young medical candidates with prospects which in the short term can slow down – and in the long term can stop – the emigration of young Hungarians living in Transylvania. Mr. Potápi added that the newly-completed apartments can contribute to this aim, and a similar project will be realized in Szatmárnémeti/Satu Mare next year.

Hungarians in Csíkszereda remind the Romanian government of the 1918 Gyulafehérvár Resolution

On Saturday the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP) held a protest in Transylvania’s Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc, which was attended by almost five hundred people. The



protestors demanded that the Romanian government – on behalf of Hungarians living in Romania – include the 1918 Gyulafehérvár Resolution in the Romanian Constitution. As has been reported, the Gyulafehérvár Resolution – which demanded the unification of Transylvania and the Romanian Kingdom – stated that the new Romanian state shall: ensure full national freedom for minorities living in its territory; enable them to practice their education, public administration and jurisdiction independently in their mother tongue, by independently elected representatives; provide them with the opportunity to be present in the country’s Parliament, in proportion to their numbers. The participants in the protest emphasized that they want a country in which Hungarians are treated as equal citizens, and not as potential sources of danger.



2016 will be the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad

Addressing a conference on the situation of Hungarian-language dual vocational training in Slovakia held in Dunaszerdahely/Dunajská Streda, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad at the Prime Minister’s Office Árpád János Potápi announced that the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad intends to dedicate 2016 the thematic year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad. The State Secretary added that the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) will decide about the detailed program of the thematic year at its annual session scheduled to take place on 3 December. At the conference in Dunaszerdahely, Mr. Potápi gave a presentation on this year’s targeted programs, the implementation of the program entitled “2015 – the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad” and its results. Mr. Potápi recalled that “2015 – the Year of Hungarian Vocational Education Abroad” program was a HUF 500 million (EUR 1.6 million) program, which was several times more than the sum allocated for the thematic Year of Hungarian Senior School Children Abroad in 2014. He added that from this sum, HUF 70 million (EUR 224,000) was allocated for Hungarian schools in Slovakia. The State Secretary said that the larger part of the total sum, HUF 340 million (EUR 1.1 million), was spent on a variety of developments (the creation of workshops and vocational arts buildings), while the rest of the support was used for research programs, training courses and scholarships.



The Committee on National Cohesion makes an official visit to Transcarpathia

The representatives of the Committee on National Cohesion of the Hungarian National Assembly made a two-day official visit to Transcarpathia, in order to be informed about the situation of the Hungarian community living in the region. During their visit, which started on Wednesday, the president of the committee Károly Pánczél congratulated the members of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in



Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDSZ) on their success during the recent municipal elections. The representatives of the committee met the locally-elected representatives of the two Hungarian organizations, including the Mayor of Beregszász/Berehove Zoltán Babják. The representatives of the KMKSZ and UMDSZ informed the committee about the situation of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia and its problems after the municipal elections which took place at the end of October.

