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Viktor Orbán: we will not allow others to dictate “who we must admit into our houses and home country”

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán delivered a speech at the central state commemoration of the 168th anniversary of the 1848-49 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence in front of Budapest’s National Museum. The Prime Minister’s speech had a strong message on migration. Mr. Orbán declared that Hungary rejects the European Union’s refugee resettlement scheme, adding that Hungary would not give in to “blackmail or threats” from Brussels. He said that “it is time to sound the alarm bells and gather allies” against the migrant quota scheme in order to prevent the “ruination of Europe”. The Prime Minister added that “we have to join forces if we want to win”, otherwise “we will fail”. He stressed that Hungarians will not allow others to dictate with whom they should live together and share their country.

In a letter addressing Hungarian communities living abroad on the occasion of the Hungarian National Holiday, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stated that “15 March 1848 saw the rebirth of a nation (...) The Hungarians of ’48 stood up firmly and bravely for the nation’s demands.” The Prime Minister highlighted that “today, as then, we seize every opportunity to ensure that no one should be allowed to challenge our national symbols, that no one should be allowed to call into question our constitutional rights, that no one should be allowed to deprive us of our schools, and that no one should be allowed to conscript our sons and send them to foreign wars.”

On the anniversary of the outbreak of Hungary’s anti-Habsburg revolution, several commemorations were organized by Hungarian communities living in the diaspora and the Carpathian Basin as well.

Zsolt Semjén: the situation of issues concerning Hungarian communities abroad is sound

Speaking at his annual hearing in front of the Committee on National Cohesion of the Hungarian National Assembly, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad and president of the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP) Zsolt Semjén said that the situation of issues concerning Hungarian communities abroad is sound and the most important programs are operating well.

The deputy prime minister said that so far 801,000 Hungarians living abroad have applied for Hungarian citizenship under the simplified naturalization procedure, and 750,000 Hungarians have already taken the oath of citizenship. Mr. Semjén highlighted that the thematic years launched by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad have been successful, and the Hungarian Government has allocated HUF 750 million (EUR 2.4 million) for the “2016 – the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad” program. The deputy prime minister added that the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program aimed to help Hungarians living in the diaspora and the Petőfi Sándor Program focusing on the strengthening of dispersed Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin are extremely fruitful. Under the former – HUF 1 billion (EUR 3.2 million) - program, the Hungarian Government sent 100 interns to Hungarian diaspora communities, while under the latter one (a HUF 350 million (EUR



1.1 million) program), 50 participants travelled to dispersed Hungarian communities in the neighboring countries to strengthen their Hungarian identity. Mr. Semjén also mentioned the HUF 50 billion (EUR 160 million) economic development program the Hungarian Government launched for Vojvodina, adding that a similar program would be launched for Transcarpathia in the near future. Concerning the issue of autonomy, he said that Hungarian communities living abroad are entitled to different forms of autonomy.



Szeklers demand territorial autonomy for Szeklerland in the petition adopted on the Day of the Szekler Freedom

As in previous years, on the Day of the Szekler Freedom (10 March) the Szekler National Council (SZNT) organized a march and a demonstration in front of the monument of the Szekler martyrs in Transylvania's Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş. At the event, the head of the SZNT Balázs Izsák read out the petition in which the SZNT demands territorial autonomy for Szeklerland and the launch of a dialogue on the issue. The demonstration was attended by almost 7,000 people who demanded special status for the historical Szeklerland with special administrative and economic privileges. The participants called on the Romanian Government to engage in dialogue with the Szekler National Council (SNZT) and Szekler local governments on the legal status of Szeklerland. They also demanded that Romania fully respect the core treaties between Romania and Hungary, in particular, that section of the document in which the parties agree to refrain from any practice that would change the ethnic composition of regions inhabited by minorities.

On Thursday, the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad issued a statement, expressing its support for the march organized by the Szekler National Council on the occasion of the Szekler Freedom Day. The statement underlines that the Government of Hungary firmly believes that the Szeklers, too, are entitled to the various forms of autonomy which other European minorities enjoy, and they are likewise due to all Hungarian communities beyond the borders. They added that the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad supports the Szekler community's aspirations to freely use their mother tongue and symbols, and condemns in the most categorical terms the actions taken by the Romanian authorities against the municipal leaders and mayors of Szeklerland.



Árpád János Potápi opens the tour of the "2016 – the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad" program in Dunaszerdahely

Speaking at the opening conference of the tour of the "2016 – the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad" program in Slovakia's Dunaszerdahely/Dunajská Streda, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said



that in order to strengthen Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin, the tools of economic policy should also be used, mentioning the development of vocational education or the strengthening of entrepreneurial mindset in young people as examples. The Carpathian Basin road show of the state secretariat's 2016 thematic year will have 14 stops, and Slovakia's Dunaszerdahely is the first one of them. Mr. Potápi recalled that thematic years for Hungarian communities abroad were launched in 2012 by the state secretariat. The first thematic year (2012) focused on Hungarian nursery school children abroad, the second one (2013) aimed to support junior elementary school children, the third one (2014) was dedicated to senior elementary school children, the fourth one (2015) was the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad, and the sixth one (2016) will become the thematic year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad, according to the decision of the Hungarian Standing Conference (Máért) made in December 2015. The state secretary added that the experience of the previous years showed that the most effective tool to enhance young Hungarians' permanence in their homeland is to ensure a profession for them by means of which they can earn a living and prosper in their homeland. He added that the thematic year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad will serve this purpose.

The president of the MKP József Berényi resigns

After the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) did not manage to win seats in the Slovak Parliament during the elections held on 5 March, the president of the MKP József Berényi resigned. The presidency of the party accepted his resignation. Potential candidates who are likely to succeed the president of the MKP include József Menyhárt, Gyula Bárdos, Péter Óry and Iván Farkas. At a conference on the results of the parliamentary elections in Slovakia, an analyst of the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI) Krisztián Rákóczi said that political division among Hungarians had a significant role in the results of the election, and cooperation would be the only solution to the current situation. He added that while Hungarians were extremely active in the previous years, the turnout in regions inhabited by Hungarians was significantly low this year, and this passivity led to the weak performance of the MKP.

After the elections, the Most-Híd ("Bridge") Hungarian-Slovakian mixed party which has won 7 seats in the Parliament, initiated talks with the Party of the Hungarian Community. The MKP accepted the invitation, but after being informed that the Most-Híd led by Béla Bugár is willing to have talks with the Slovak National Party (SNS) on government coalition, it refused to attend the meeting. According the MKP the activity of the Most-Híd is unacceptable, and as long as a decision on the composition of the government is not made, the MKP will postpone the meeting with the Most-Híd.





The VMSZ submits its list of candidates to the Republic Electoral Commission

On Sunday, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) has submitted its list of candidates to the Republic Electoral Commission of Serbia in Belgrade, making its participation in the early parliamentary elections official. For being able to participate in the elections, parties had to collect at least 10,000 supporting signatures; the VMSZ managed to collect 11,698 signatures. The VMSZ will take part in the elections in cooperation with the Hungarian Democratic Party in Vojvodina and the Hungarian Party of Unity which will support the list of the VMSZ.



Government commissioner István Grezsa announces financial support for Beregszász

During his official visit in Transcarpathia, government commissioner at the Prime Minister's Office István Grezsa announced that the Hungarian Government would allocate HUF 12.5 million (EUR 40,000) financial support for Transcarpathia's Beregszász/Berehove in order to treat the social problems of the town and develop its cultural life. Speaking at a press conference with the mayor of Beregszász Zoltán Babják, Mr. Grezsa said that the Hungarian Government pays particular attention to the Hungarian community living in Transcarpathia, as well as to the Ukrainian-Ruthenian majority of the region, trying to provide support for both of them.

