

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

19/2016



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

NPKI | RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD



Potápi: the VMSZ continues to be a strategic partner of Hungary

Speaking at the session of the Committee on National Cohesion of the Hungarian National Assembly, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) continues to be a strategic partner of the Hungarian Government. The state secretary added that “new political formations” which recently appeared in Vojvodina (referring to the Hungarian Movement organization which was recently established by some former members of the VMSZ) are typically liberal, left-wing and anti-national formations. He also drew attention to the fact what kinds of forces are behind this new organization and what are their aims. Mr. Potápi stressed that – in his opinion – one of the purposes of this formation is to eliminate the Hungarian community in Vojvodina. Speaking at the event, the president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians István Pásztor said that although the VMSZ will have only 4 seats in the Serbian Parliament instead of the former 6, its strength to enforce Hungarian interests will not weaken. Mr. Pásztor also admitted that the VMSZ had expected better results, nevertheless, the party has no reason to be dissatisfied.

As is known, on 24 April 2016 early parliamentary, provincial and municipal elections were held in Serbia.

Analysis on the US Department of State annual reports

The latest analysis of the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI) examines the annual reports of the US Department of State on the issue human rights in different countries of the world, focusing on the countries of the Carpathian Basin, including Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine and Serbia. The analysis highlights that the US is basically satisfied with the situation of minorities in Slovakia. Therefore, it does not mention violations of rights Hungarians living in Slovakia frequently face, neither the disadvantages of the Slovak Act on Citizenship, nor the problems of public education. Regarding Ukraine, the analysis underlines that the annual reports of the US Department of State do not pay much attention to the situation of the Hungarian community living there. It is mainly due to the Ukrainian internal political situation. In contrast to this, the reports place a greater emphasis on the situation of Hungarians living in Serbia, in particular, on issues connected with the restitution of church properties. The NPKI’s analysis also points out that the situation of minority rights in Romania always receive much attention in the annual human rights reports of the US Department of State. In spite of the fact that the majority of reports deal with the issue of the Roma in Romania, the problems of the Hungarian community also gain more and more attention, in particular, the restitution of church properties, problems connected with the Hungarian-language education of the Csángós, as well as lawsuits related to the use of the Szekler flag and other Szekler symbols.



Máért's committee on economic development: cooperation between enterprises in Hungary and abroad is of crucial importance

On Monday, the Hungarian Standing Conference's (Máért) committee on economic development and municipalities held a meeting. One of the main topics of the meeting was the cooperation between enterprises in the kin-state and those abroad, as well as the economic development of Transcarpathia. Addressing the event, State Secretary for economic development and regulation at the Ministry for National Economy István Lepsényi said that the strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises is a key question not only in Hungary, but in neighboring countries as well, since economy would collapse without them. State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi said at the meeting that one of the most important aims is to help young Hungarians living abroad stay and prosper in their homeland. He added that this is why the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad launched the "2016 - the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad" program. Mr. Potápi stressed that so far the state secretariat managed to contact more than 1,300 young people living outside Hungary who expressed their pleasure for the program, noting they have never received so much attention before.

The Friends of Hungary Foundation holds its third annual conference in Budapest

The Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly László Kövér and Marek Kuchcinski, Marshal of the Polish Sejm met the representatives of the Friends of Hungary Foundation in Budapest's Parliament on Friday, as part of the foundation's third annual conference, a three-day world congress of prominent figures of the Hungarian diaspora and Hungarian communities across the world. The congress was held in the Hungarian capital between 6-8 May. Addressing the event, the Hungarian house speaker László Kövér noted the significance of national cultures rooted in Christianity and the democratic structure of nation states as the basis for Europe's strength and competitiveness. Speaking at the event, the president of the Foundation Szilveszter Vizi E. said that due to the stormy history of Hungary, plenty of Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin were forced to leave their homeland, and had to start a new life in a new environment. He stressed that many of them preserved their identity and are proud of their ancestors, therefore, we can declare that the Hungarian nation is a "world nation". Before the congress, friends of Hungary were also received by President of Hungary János Áder and his wife, Anita Herczegh, at the Sándor Palace located in the Buda Castle. János Áder thanked all the participants for their loyal support to Hungary and reminded the audience of Hungary's anti-Soviet revolution in 1956. The President added that "Losing the freedom fight was a tragic loss to Hungary, but at the same time it was a great benefit for those countries of the free world, which became the new home of thousands of Hungarians." Prior to the congress, Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó presented



two founding members of the Friends of Hungary Foundation with the Order of Merit of Hungary, Medium Cross, civilian division.

A “Hungarian Erasmus Program” starts in September

On Friday, Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog announced in Romania’s Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş that a new program entitled Makovecz Imre higher education cooperation program in the Carpathian Basin will be launched in September. The program supported by the Hungarian Government will provide an opportunity for more than 300 university or college students in Hungary and abroad to receive a five-month scholarship to another Hungarian-language university in the Carpathian Basin. The minister stressed that the program was named after the renowned Hungarian architect Imre Makovecz who passed away in 2011. He added that the program will involve every university in the Carpathian Basin which offer Hungarian-language courses.



László Tőkés writes to president Iohannis to urge the restitution of church properties

The president of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT), MEP László Tőkés has written to the president of Romania Klaus Iohannis to urge the restitution of church properties confiscated during the communism. On Thursday, at a press conference held in Budapest, Mr. Tőkés said that the restitution of church properties is the biggest debt of Romania, and stressed that the delay “reflects negatively on the country.” He added that it also depends on the current Romanian government and president Iohannis whether the injustice of the communism will continue to be legitimate or the situation will change and the properties which have not been restituted yet will be returned to the right owners or their heirs.



The final results of the early elections in Serbia are announced

On Thursday evening, the Republic Electoral Commission of Serbia announced the final results of the early elections held on 24 April. The Serbian Progressive Party won the elections, receiving 1,823,147 votes (48.25 percent), that is, 131 seats in Parliament. On 4 May, the election was repeated in 15 towns, due to irregularities which took place in the first round. According to the final results, 11 lists won seats in Parliament. Among minority lists, five parties managed to win seats, including the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (4 seats), the Bosniak Democratic Community (2 seats), the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak (2 seats), the Albanian Party for Democratic Action (1 seat) and the Green Party (1 seat).





The Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs expresses thanks to Hungary for supporting Ukraine

On Friday, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin made a visit to Hungary's Consulate in Transcarpathia's Beregszász/Berehove, where he expressed his gratitude to Hungary for the consequent political help Hungary provides for Ukraine to achieve its independence and sovereignty. During his stay in Transcarpathia, the minister held talks with Deputy State Secretary for Eastern Opening at Hungary's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Zsolt Csutora. At a press conference held after the talks, Mr. Klimkin said he is convinced that the consulate's work will be needed even after the European Union abolishes the visa regime with Ukraine (according to his hopes), since the local border traffic plays an important role in Transcarpathia.



The Western European Association of Hungarian Country Organizations holds its annual general meeting

The umbrella organization of Hungarian communities living in Western Europe, the Western European Association of Hungarian Country Organizations (NYEOMSZSZ) held its annual general meeting in Stockholm, with the participation of State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi. At the meeting, Mr. Potápi gave a presentation on current issues connected with the policy for with Hungarian communities abroad, and introduced his state secretariat's 2016 and 2017 plans in the field. The state secretary said that the main aim and task of the NYEOMSZSZ which was established 15 years ago is to coordinate the civil life of Hungarians living in Western Europe, in order to prevent Hungarians from forgetting their mother tongue, culture and identity. He stressed that the Hungarian Government supports these organizations both directly and indirectly, by means of different programs. He mentioned the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program as an example under which the kin-state sends interns to Hungarian diaspora organizations. Every year since 2013, one hundred interns travel to diaspora organizations, 40 of them – to Hungarian organizations in Western Europe. The general meeting of the NYEOMSZSZ was held at the Hungarian House in Stockholm, with the participation of 80 members, including Hungarian politicians from the Carpathian Basin, the Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly Gergely Gulyás and Special Commissioner of the Prime Minister Katalin Szili.

