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State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad: the Petőfi Sándor Program closes a successful year

According to the statement of the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad sent to the Hungarian news agency MTI, the Petőfi Sándor Program closed a successful year and on the basis of the feedbacks of host organizations and dispersed Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin, the work the program's interns started will be needed in the future as well. The statement highlights that taking into account the experience of the first year, in 2016 further 50 interns will be sent to dispersed Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin, while the number of host organizations and venues will expand. The statement recalled that in 2015 fifty interns took part in the program. Their task was to strengthen local Hungarian communities, churches and educational institutions by focusing on community building, and the cultivation of the mother tongue and national traditions. The aim of the interns' work and that of the Petőfi Sándor Program is to strengthen the Hungarian identity of dispersed communities and decrease or stop their assimilation.



Member of the RMDSZ Lóránt Vincze elected leader of the Federal Union of European Nationalities

The candidate of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) has been elected leader of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). At the congress of the FUEN held in Poland's Wroclaw, Mr. Vincze won with 89 votes, while his rival, Dieter Paul Küssner representing the Danish national minority living in Germany received 74 votes. Before he became the head of the FUEN, Mr. Vincze was the deputy chair of the federation and coordinated the Minority SafePack European citizens' initiative. The president of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen – who had nominated Mr. Vincze for the post of the president of the FUEN – said that it is important that the Federal Union of European Nationalities as an umbrella organization for the autochthonous, national minorities and ethnic groups in Europe become stronger, helping European institutions recognize that the situation of national minorities in Europe should be settled urgently.

Lectures and consultations for young Hungarian entrepreneurs in Transylvania

The Carpathian Basin road show of the “2016 – the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad” arrived in Romania's Szatmárnémeti/Satu Mare where lectures and consultations were held on enterprise development at the extramural department of the Babeş-Bolyai University of Sciences. The event drew a high number of young people in the region who are interested in enterprise development or are planning to start a business. The Carpathian Basin road show is organized by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office in partnership with the Design Terminal. In the first part of the event in



Szatmárnémeti, the participants listened to lectures on entrepreneurial skill development, the positioning of enterprises, as well as communication and marketing strategies. The attendees also received information about the competition the state secretariat will launch soon for young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad or young people wishing to become entrepreneurs who will have an opportunity to win non-refundable financial aid between HUF 3-6 million (EUR 9,560-19,120).



Vocational schools in Kassa and Perbenyik receive HUF 5 million financial aid

The Szakkay József Vocational-Technical School in Slovakia's Kassa/Kosice received a non-refundable aid of HUF 5 million (EUR 15,000) from the Hungarian Government under the program "2015 – the year of vocational education abroad" launched by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad. The inauguration ceremony of the new developments was held on Thursday, and was attended by Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office of Hungary Péter Szilágyi, Hungary's Consul General in Kassa Ádám Szesztay and the deputy-chair of the county István Zachariáš. Speaking at the event, the deputy state secretary said that together with its partners, the state secretariat prepared a 5-year action plan under which it will support Hungarian educational institutions abroad every year. He added that under the program "2016 – the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad" they will also support those young people who graduated from school and wish to become entrepreneurs or already have a business. Mr. Szilágyi said that the competition for these young people will be open from May 2016. After the inauguration ceremony in Kassa, the deputy state secretary visited the Agricultural Vocational School of Perbenyik/Pribeník where the renovated educational training kitchen and the new equipment of the school's metalworking workshops and repair shops were inaugurated.

Partial solution in the issue of Hungarian schools in Slovakia

On Wednesday, the Slovakian Government adopted an amendment to the planned educational draft law which means only a partial solution to the situation of small Hungarian-language schools in the country. According to the planned law, schools in Slovakia which have a low number of students (less than 100) should close from September 2016. This plan constitutes a serious danger to about 100 Hungarian-language schools. The adopted amendment states that the law on the minimum number of students will not apply to elementary schools, therefore, 60 schools – among them, 29 Hungarian schools – "will be saved". Hungarian teachers in Slovakia and local Hungarian politicians agree that the amendment is not a sufficient solution to the situation, since it concerns only a low number of schools. The head of the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia (SZMPSZ) Tibor Jókai said that the adopted amendment "is less than a partial solution". He added that during



consultations with the Slovakian Ministry of Education, they made clear that restrictions on the minimum number of students in a class should be completely removed from the law.

The VMSZ intends to continue cooperation with the SNS

After negotiations with the President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that the VMSZ intends to continue cooperation with the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). Speaking after the talks, the president of the VMSZ said that there is agreement between him and the head of the SNS Aleksandar Vučić in this issue. He added that they had already concluded an agreement in principle, the next step is to agree upon the concrete conditions of the cooperation. Mr. Pásztor added that he had already had talks with Mr. Vucic and other representatives of the SNS, but the cooperation will – first of all – concern provincial and municipal levels. The leader of the VMSZ added that the provincial parliament of Vojvodina and provincial bodies are expected to be formed by the middle of June.

Levente Magyar: investments of several billion HUF to be launched in Eastern Hungary and Transcarpathia

Addressing the 15th Kuruc Days in Eastern Hungary's Tarpa, State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy at Hungary's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Levente Magyar said that infrastructural and economic development investments worth several billion HUF will be launched in the region of Hungary's Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg county and Transcarpathia. The state secretary said that HUF 1.5 billion (EUR 4.7 million) will be allocated for the building of a fruit processing factory in the district of Tarpa and a cycle path between Tarpa and Transcarpathia's Badaló/Badalovo. He added that under the Transcarpathian economic development program, the Hungarian Government allocates HUF 2.5 billion (EUR 7.9 million) in 2016 and HUF 5 billion (EUR 15.9 million) in 2017 for the strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises in Transcarpathia and their investments. Mr. Magyar added that in addition to the HUF 7.5 billion (EUR 23.9 million) of non-refundable aid, Hungary will ensure a further HUF 20 billion (EUR 63 million) in credit in 2016 and 2017 for Transcarpathian enterprises.

An exhibition presenting the life of bishop Áron Márton opens in Vienna

An exhibition presenting the life and heritage of Transylvanian catholic bishop Áron Márton has been opened at the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Vienna. The exhibition is part of the Áron Márton Memorial Year which was launched by the State Secretariat



for Hungarian Communities Abroad, marking the 120th anniversary of the bishop's birth. The chief patron of the memorial year is the President of Hungary János Áder and the archbishop of the Roman Catholic church district of Gyulyfehérvár György Jakubinyi. Speaking after the opening of the exhibition, the head of the memorial year's program committee Gergely Gaál said that "during the communist dictatorship, Vienna was the nearest bastion of the free world for Hungarians, therefore, it is a tradition that our compatriots living here regularly commemorate the great figures of our history." On the second day of the two-day event series, a holy mass was held in the chapel of the university Pazmaneum in the honor of bishop Áron Márton. The mass was followed by a special commemoration which was addressed by State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi.

