

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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Hungarian diaspora communities take on an increasing role in shaping the kin-state's policy for Hungarian communities abroad

On Wednesday in Budapest, speaking at the opening of the training course organized for this year's interns of the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program, Government Commissioner István Grezsa said that Hungarian diaspora communities are taking on an increasing role in the shaping of the kin-state's policy for Hungarian communities abroad. Mr. Grezsa highlighted that 130 out of the 150 scholarship holders of the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor and Petőfi Sándor Programs are joining the programs as new participants. The government commissioner said that the program is now being launched for the fourth time, and on each occasion the hope is that all interns will do their jobs well wherever they may be sent. One hundred scholarship holders are taking part in the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program, which is designated to address Hungarian diaspora communities and which lasts from May 2016 to June 2017. In Europe scholarship holders will be sent to Hungarian communities in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, Norway, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey. Additionally, interns will also travel to communities in the United States, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and New Zealand. The purpose of the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program is to improve the Hungarian language skills of members of Hungarian diaspora communities, and to encourage more intensive activity within Hungarian communities and closer communication with Hungary: in other words, to reinforce their Hungarian identity.

The committee of the Hungarian Standing Conference on dispersed Hungarian communities holds meeting

On Wednesday, the Hungarian Standing Conference's Committee on dispersed Hungarian communities held a meeting focusing on the results of the first year of the Petőfi Sándor Program (PSP) and the activity of the educational center in Temesvár/Timișoara focusing on dispersed Hungarian communities. Speaking at the session, government commissioner István Grezsa said that the first year of the PSP was extremely successful. He added that feedback from dispersed Hungarian organizations in the Carpathian Basin shows that the number of interns should even be increased. Mr. Grezsa highlighted that, although the program is not enough to stop assimilation, it has managed to "revive" a lot of Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin. Co-chair of the committee Barna Bodó said that dispersed Hungarian communities play an important role in the building of the nation. He also stressed the importance of sister-city relations between towns in Hungary and Hungarian towns abroad.

Summer training course of the "2016 – the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad" begins in Mezőkövesd



On Monday a summer training course for young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad started in Hungary's Mezőkövesd, as part of the "2016 – the year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad" program, launched by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad. The program has 200 participants who are taking part in business and marketing training sessions. The event was addressed by Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Péter Szilágyi. The Deputy State Secretary said that the young entrepreneurs who are taking part in the course have an influence on the economic development of their region, which is an essential condition for Hungarians abroad to be able to live and prosper in their homeland. The aim of the summer training course – which is realized in cooperation with mentors from the Design Terminal – is to help young Hungarian entrepreneurs become successful, to provide an opportunity for common thinking, sharing ideas and experience, and to promote cooperation and the establishment of cross-border projects.



Third Duna Day in Torockó

On Saturday, the third Duna Day was held in Transylvania's picturesque village of Torockó/ Rimetea. Two years ago, Hungary's public television channel Duna Television bought and renovated a listed 19th-century building in the town. Since then this building has been home to the so-called "Duna House" which offers cultural programs for the dispersed Hungarian community living in the town and organizes the Duna Day every year. Addressing this year's event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi expressed his gratitude – on behalf of the Hungarian government – to Duna Television for the establishment of the Duna House and the organization of the Duna Day, which helps strengthen the Hungarian community in the town. Mr. Potápi stressed that the kin-state pays particular attention to scattered Hungarian communities. He added that "if we are able to slow down demographic processes and support Hungarians abroad economically, they will be able to become stronger, regardless of whether they live in a block or in dispersed communities." Mr. Potápi stressed that "every single Hungarian counts."



The MKP has new president

On Saturday, the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) held a congress in Slovakia's Érsekújvár/ to elect new officials. The party elected a new president, new head for the National Council, vice-presidents and members of the national presidency. The party had two presidential candidates, József Menyhárt and Péter Óry, but Mr. Óry withdrew at the last moment, and Mr. Menyhárt was elected president of the party by an overwhelming majority. The new president expressed his gratitude to former head of the party József Berényi for his work, adding that he would continue to treat both former heads of the MKP – Pál Csáky and József Berényi



– as presidents, since they have done a lot for Hungarians living in Slovakia. At the next phase of the congress, Péter Óry was elected head of the MKP's National Council. The event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén. On behalf of the Hungarian government Mr. Semjén said that Hungary continues to consider the MKP the main political advocacy organization for the Hungarian community in Slovakia. The Deputy Prime Minister added that the MKP should not consider the past period unsuccessful, referring to the results of local elections held in March. He added that although the main purpose – winning seats in the Parliament and obtaining government positions – was not achieved, the MKP is extremely strong at regional level. Mr. Semjén underlined that Hungary's attitude towards the MKP has not changed. The Deputy Prime Minister also touched on the issue of Hungarian-Slovakian relations, stressing that they are extremely good at governmental level. He added that these relations and economic cooperation can contribute to the settling of problematic issues between the two countries in the field of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad.



The VMSZ intends to be part of the Serbian government at the level of state secretaries

On Wednesday, speaking at a press conference after talks with the head of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Aleksandar Vučić, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that, as in the past two years, the VMSZ intends to be part of the Serbian government at the level of state secretaries. Mr. Vučić and Mr. Pásztor held talks in Belgrade on the opportunities for cooperation within the Government, and the Government's program. After the meeting the parties confirmed that the SNS and VMSZ would cooperate at national, provincial and local governmental level. Mr. Pásztor added that they also discussed the SNS's government-planned program and it is completely acceptable for the VMSZ.



Hungary supports the economic development of Transcarpathia

On Thursday the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy Levente Magyar and the president of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and member of the Ukrainian parliament László Brenzovics concluded a cooperation agreement in Beregszász/Berehove on the launch before the end of the year of an economic development funding program of nearly HUF 30 billion (EUR 96 million) aimed at the economic strengthening of Hungarians in Transcarpathia. At the signing ceremony at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute, Mr. Magyar stressed that an important prerequisite for the continued existence of Hungarians in Transcarpathia is that, in addition to a willingness to work, they should also possess the required tools. The state secretary added that this is the reason the Hungarian government has decided to launch an economic development program of



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unprecedented scale in Transcarpathia, so that the farmers, entrepreneurs and companies who provide the economic foundations for the continued survival of this part of the nation receive funding and loan opportunities. The president of the KMKSZ László Brenzovics said that “By launching this program, the Hungarian government has once again proven that it will not abandon the Hungarians of Transcarpathia in this extremely difficult current situation, and is providing support to enable the community to continue to live in its homeland.”