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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Government also supports Hungarian communities beyond the borders with economic means

On Monday, speaking at the opening day of the Dr. Szász Pál scholarship program, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi said that it is important for the Government that every Hungarian community should be able to find advancement in their native land, therefore, the kin-state supports Hungarian communities abroad with economic means. At the event held in the House of Hungarians (Magyarság Háza), the State Secretary said that the policy for Hungarian communities abroad was previously characterized by ups and downs. June 2001, when the Status Law was adopted, was one of the peaks, while December 2004 was an all-time low with the referendum held with respect to dual citizenship. In 2010, however, with the change of government, major changes started in the field of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad. That was the year, for instance, when the law on the simplified naturalization procedure was adopted, to be followed by other regulations which determine the framework of Hungary's policy for Hungarian communities abroad,. As Mr. Potápi pointed out, almost 820,000 people have applied for Hungarian citizenship so far, and 770,000 have been granted citizenship and have taken their citizenship oaths. He added that the goal is to achieve that the number of those having requested Hungarian citizenship should reach one million by 2018. The state secretary added that since 2015, his state secretariat has been focusing on a new field – the field of economic development – making serious efforts to support Hungarian communities living abroad with economic means.

The Dr. Szász Pál scholarship program for lawyers was established by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice in 2012, in cooperation with Bethlen Gábor Fund Management Ltd. The purpose of the scholarship program is to help Hungarian communities beyond the borders have highly qualified lawyers committed to the nation who are equally familiar with the relevant terminology in Hungarian and in the language of the majority state and have gained experience in both countries. Scholarship grants may be awarded within the framework of the program to students who are engaged in legal studies in their native countries, and are interested in business law.

Árpád János Potápi: Szeklers from Bukovina are loyal citizens of the country

Speaking in Hungary's Bátaszék at the national meeting of Szeklers from Bukovina (historical region in Central Europe, divided between Romania and Ukraine, located on the northern slopes of the central Eastern Carpathians and the adjoining plains), State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that Szeklers from Bukovina have proved in the past 75 years that they are loyal citizens of Hungary: they have preserved their faith and Hungarian identity. The state secretary asked the participants of the meeting to be proud of their Szekler and Hungarian identity, and to pass it on to their children and grandchildren. Mr. Potápi recalled that the wish of Szeklers from Bukovina to move back to Hungary became



stronger in 1939, and in 1940 – when Northern Transylvania was reattached to Hungary – a great part of young people left Bukovina and moved to the kin-state. In 1941, under the government of Prime Minister László Bárdossy, this process became more intensive and Szeklers living in five villages of Bukovina moved back to Hungary within weeks.

The National Meeting of Szeklers from Bukovina was organized for the 11th time by the National Association of Szeklers from Bukovina. This time the venue was Bátaszék (a town in Hungary's Tolna megye) where several Szekler families started a new life after World War II.



Hunor Kelemen is satisfied with the results of the RMDSZ

On Saturday, speaking in Transylvania's Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş, the head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen announced that the RMDSZ achieved very good results in the Romanian municipal elections held on 5 June, and due to these results the Hungarian community living in Romania now has a strong representation in the country's local governments. Mr. Kelemen spoke about this at a meeting of the main decision-making body of the RMDSZ, the Council of Alliance Representatives. The president of the RMDSZ stressed that his party was also extremely successful at the negotiations held after the municipal elections, as a result of which the RMDSZ has more than 200 vice-mayors in Romania, and 5 heads of county municipalities. Mr. Kelemen recalled that in the municipal elections held in Romania on 5 June, the candidates of the RMDSZ won more than 80 percent of Romanian Hungarians' votes. He added that this proves that the RMDSZ's program and candidates are credible. Mr. Kelemen said – referring to parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in Romania at the end of the year – that it is extremely important that Hungarians in Romania have a strong representation in Parliament, since without this the strength of Hungarian representation in municipalities “might be halved or even ceased.”



State Secretary Árpád János Potápi addresses 25th Mór Jókai Summer University in Révkomárom

On 11 July, the 25th Mór Jókai Summer University and Ferenc Rákóczi II. Summer University organized by the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia (SZMPSZ) started at the conference centre of the J. Selye University in Révkomárom/Komárno and the Tompa Mihály Reformed High School in Rimaszombat/Rimavská Sobota. Addressing the conference, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi greeted the participants on behalf of the Hungarian Government and the State Secretariat for Hungarians communities abroad on the occasion of the jubilee event, and expressed his pleasure that the SZMPSZ organizes its summer universities “at a Carpathian Basin level.” The state secretary told Hungarian teachers taking part



in the conference that “The greatness of your profession is that while you work with children, you build the future of the nation. You show the way for young people, and make them realize that they are part of a community: the Hungarian community. Children give a lot to the community and also receive a lot from the community. Whether this community will become a resource in the life of these children depends greatly on the school where they study and the teachers who educate them. Therefore, teachers’ profession is a strategic job. In towns where there are no Hungarian schools, the Hungarian language and culture will vanish, and the Hungarian nation will soon disappear. It seems that in the Carpathian Basin the borders of Hungarian language schools coincide with the borders of the Hungarian nation.” At the end of his speech, the state secretary reiterated that the Hungarian Government will not leave Hungarian educational institutions abroad alone and will continue to ensure financial support for them.

2016 Gombaszög Summer Camp in Slovakia begins

On Wednesday, the 2016 Gombaszög Summer Camp, the largest summer event of the Hungarian community in Slovakia began. This year the summer university and festival – which during the past years was organized in Krasznahorka váralja/Krásnohorské Podhradie – was held again at its original venue, Gombaszög/Gombasek. Speaking at the opening ceremony, the main organizer of the event Örs Orosz said that “this moment is the greatest milestone for us and the Gombaszög Summer Camp. We have been given an opportunity to take the issue of the camp in our own hands, and formulate its infrastructure alone. Every tree planted and every stone placed here will serve the future generations of the camp.” The Gombaszög Summer Camp was officially addressed by State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi. The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad allocated HUF 84 million (EUR 267,000) for the event, due to which the organizers were able to hold the camp in its original venue.

Levente Magyar: The Hungarian Government supports Transcarpathian Hungarians with economic means

On Saturday, speaking at the III Turul Expo exhibition and fair in Transcarpathia’s Tiszapéterfalva/Pijterfolvo, State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Levente Magyar said that “Among Hungarian communities living abroad, the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia is fighting the most vigorously for its permanence, and the Hungarian Government supports this struggle with economic means.” The state secretary stressed that in the next years the Hungarian Government will ensure huge financial support for the region in order to promote its economic development and contribute to the establishment of new workplaces. Mr. Magyar added that under the economic development program the Hungarian Government recently launched to help Transcarpathia, the first tenders



will be announced in some days, as a results of which several thousand Transcarpathian Hungarian entrepreneurs and farmers will receive serious financial assistance (the fund available for this purpose in 2016 is HUF 2 billion (EUR 6.3 million)).

On Sunday – after the Turul Expo held on Saturday – the Hungarian community celebrated its largest mass event, the Turul Festival in Tiszaújlak/Vilok. The event is held in front of the Turul statue (a mythological bird of prey in Hungarian tradition) of the town every year, at the venue of the first victorious battle of the Hungarian War of Independence led by Ferenc Rákóczy II in 1703-1711. Speaking at the event, the president of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and member of the Ukrainian Parliament László Brenzovics stressed that “the preservation of peace between nationalities in Transcarpathia is extremely important, since Transcarpathia is our home, and we will do everything to keep the situation stable in the region.” After the opening speech, the participants held a minute’s silence to remember the victims of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine and those of the Nizza terror attack. The event was attended by the two largest Hungarian organizations in Ukraine, the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDSZ).

