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Exemplary multilingualism in Nagybánya

On Thursday the municipality of Nagybánya/Baia Mare in Romania unanimously adopted a resolution permitting the installation of trilingual place-name signs in the town. According to the draft resolution, the place-name signs will indicate the town's name in Romanian (Baia Mare), Hungarian (Nagybánya) and German (Neustadt). Local government representative from the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Richárd Kovács said that "a town which is applying for the title of 'European Capital of Culture' must respect the rights of local national minorities." According to Romanian law, multilingual place-name signs can be installed only in those towns and cities in which a certain national minority forms at least 20 percent of the population. In the 115,000-strong Nagybánya, Hungarians constitute only 10.3 percent of the town's population, according to census data from 2011. So far, trilingual place-name signs – in Romanian, Hungarian and German – have been installed only in those towns in Romania in which formerly there were significant German populations. Thus, trilingual place-name signs were installed in Brassó/Braşov, Nagyszeben/Sibiu, Segesvár/Sighişoara and Temesvár/Timişoara. In contrast, Hungarians in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca did not manage to install bilingual place-name signs in the town. This is despite the fact that – according to census data from 1992 which was valid when the 2001 law on installation of multilingual place-name signs was adopted – the Hungarian population in Kolozsvár exceeded the 20 percent threshold. By 2011, the Hungarian population in the town was only 16 percent of the total.

Szekler flags are removed from public spaces in Kézdivásárhely

Last weekend the mayor's office of Kézdivásárhely/Târgu Secuiesc removed the Szekler flags which were raised in front of the town's military school building in summer 2014, in the presence of Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén. The mayor's office also removed a Szekler flag which had earlier been taken from the Gábor Áron statue but later returned to its original site by representatives from the Sixty-four County Youth Movement. A spokesperson from the mayor's office said that they were obliged to remove Szekler flags by a final decision of the Court of Brassó. Speaking to the Hungarian daily Háromszék, the mayor of the town Tibor Bokor declared that, despite these measures, he will place further Szekler flags in the town, and will again invite Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén to the official ceremony. Mr. Bokor added that the next flags will probably be raised in areas owned by private individuals or the church.



The number of Hungarian classes in Slovakia might be increased

Last fall, a new educational curriculum framework entered into force in Slovakia which was strongly criticized by Hungarian teachers, since it reduced the number of



mother-tongue and optional classes. According to the curriculum, Hungarian children in primary school grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 should have only 5, 6, 5 and 5 Hungarian language classes per week respectively, while Slovak children in the same grades are entitled to have 9, 8, 7 and 7 Slovak language classes per week respectively. Trying to solve this problem, teachers in Hungarian schools have used free classes to teach the Hungarian language. As a result, no classes were left for the implementation of the schools' programs. In May, State Secretary for Education Peter Krajňák asked the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia (SZMPSZ) to draw up a syllabus which is also acceptable to Hungarians. In connection with this, the head of the SZMPSZ Tibor Jókai said that it is likely that the current curriculum – which is very unfavorable for the Hungarian community in Slovakia – will be amended, and representatives of the Ministry of Education will be willing to take into account the SZMPSZ proposals.



The VMSZ and the SZHP sign coalition agreement

The Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) have signed a coalition agreement. The aim of the two parties is to realize joint program goals, and establish good relations between Serbs and Hungarians. The elements of the program include goals covering every field of social life, in particular those aimed at strengthening economic life, ensuring a better life for citizens and promoting the further development of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The SNS and the VMSZ agreed to support projects focusing on infrastructural investments which are crucial from Serbia's viewpoint, and agreed to make all efforts to approve the situation of agriculture, the conditions of agricultural production, and farmers' living and working conditions. A further purpose of the two parties is to "strengthen the fight against corruption and crime", and increase the security of Serbia's citizens.



Hungary's Consulate General in Ungvár celebrates its 25th anniversary

On Saturday Hungary's Consulate General in Ungvár/Uzhhorod staged various events and a reception to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its opening. Addressing the event, Consul General of Hungary in Ungvár József Buhajla said that Hungary's foreign representation in Ungvár is the same age as Ukraine's independence. Mr. Buhajla added that in 1993 the consulate became a consulate general, and in 2006 it moved to its current building, where it is now operating with 60 employees. Speaking at the event, Dr. István Grezsa, government commissioner for the cooperation and development of Hungary's Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county and Transcarpathia, praised the activity of Hungary's Consulate General in Ungvár. Mr. Grezsa said that "it indicates the importance of the consulate's work that – together with Hungary's consulate in Beregszász/Beregove – it is one of Hungary's largest foreign representations in the world." He added that the Hungarian government pays



particular attention to the activity of the Consulate General of Hungary in Ungvár, since Ungvár and Beregszász are “extremely important and exciting places for Hungarian diplomacy.”

New sports ground supported by the Hungarian government is inaugurated in Ungvár

On Friday a new sports ground was inaugurated at the Ungvár/Uzhhorod National University which received 20 million HUF (EUR 63,000) of funding from the Hungarian government. Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. István Grezsa, government commissioner responsible for the cooperation and development of Hungary's Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county and Ukraine's Transcarpathia, said that it was symbolic for the new sports field to open a few days before the Hungarian and Ukrainian national holidays. He added that with this gesture Hungary intends to prove that, in addition to supporting Hungarians living in Transcarpathia, it is also making every effort to help Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Russians, Jews, Roma and other nationalities living in the region.



President János Áder opens Hungarian cultural conference in Brazil

President János Áder opened a conference on Hungarian culture and language held at the University of São Paulo/Universidade de São Paulo (USP) in Brazil. A Hungarian course launched by the USP in cooperation with the University of Pécs in Hungary and with support from the Pallas Athene Domus Animae Foundation (PADA) was extremely successful, attended by over 100 students in the past year and a half. The conference linked to the course, entitled “Hungarians in Brazil”, was organized for the second time and was opened by the President of Hungary János Áder. There are Hungarian communities in very country in South America, but the largest and most active ones are in Brazil. The aim of the conference was to further promote Hungarian language and culture in Brazil and strengthen links between the University of São Paulo and Hungarian higher education institutions. The 2016 conference was also crucial for another reason: during the event the USP Hungarian Professors' Circle was established and the cooperation agreement between the Budapest University of Technology and Economics and USP's technical department was extended.

