

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

39/2016



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Árpád János Potápi: One third more Hungarians abroad registered for October referendum

Speaking before the Committee of National Cohesion of the Hungarian National Assembly, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the number of Hungarians from beyond the borders registering for the 2 October referendum has increased by almost a third compared with the previous vote. The state secretary said that 274,576 people registered by the 17 September deadline, while this number was 194,000 at the time of the last parliamentary election. In his words, the joint task now is to ensure that people from among them should actually cast their votes in the largest possible numbers. He added that the deadline for the receipt of votes cast by mail is 11.59 p.m. on 1 October. The state secretary stressed that they encourage people to say no in the referendum, since it is important to ensure that there should be no means for changing the ethnic make-up of the Carpathian Basin and Hungary in a forceful manner. Mr. Potápi highlighted that this year the Hungarian Diaspora Council will meet on 30 November, while the meeting of the Hungarian Standing Conference is scheduled for 1 December. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán will open both. Mr. Potápi added that – as expected – 2017 will be the thematic year of Hungarian family businesses abroad. He described the 2016 year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad as successful, and said: it is not out of the question that the allocation of HUF 525 million (EUR 1.7 million) available for calls will be raised by another HUF 50 to 60 million (EUR 1630,000 – 195,000). The state secretary added that in total, 964 proposals have been submitted under the program, and grants will be awarded to approximately 110.

Forced resettlement is a threat to autochthonous national minorities

Speaking at a conference entitled Safeguarding the interests of minorities on the international stage held in Budapest on Tuesday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the forced resettlement of migrants poses a threat to autochthonous national minorities, and is therefore unacceptable. The state secretary added that we should remind the EU that it should primarily defend the European identity. Mr. Potápi pointed out that out of the 90 member organizations of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) functioning as a pan-European umbrella organization for the protection of minorities, seven are Hungarian. He added that the fact that the percentage of Hungarian member organizations is this high clearly indicates that national minorities in Hungary and Hungarians abroad are not in a state of inaction, and do not expect help from the Hungarian Government in every instance, but make attempts themselves to fight for the rights they are entitled to. The state secretary stressed that the Hungarian Government is making every effort to create an adequate background for these endeavors. President of FUEN Loránt Vincze said at the conference that spectacular achievements are rare in the protection of minorities, but the FUEN seeks to make progress step by step with its own means. He emphasized that as a lobbying organization, they would like to see more attention being diverted towards the



protection of national minorities on the European scene and the adoption of the necessary measures.

The Autonomy Council of Hungarians from the Carpathian Basin encourages Hungarians to vote “No” in Hungary’s referendum on EU migrant quotas

Speaking at a press conference in Budapest after a two-day meeting of the Autonomy Council in the Carpathian Basin (KMAT), the re-elected head of the organization MEP László Tótkés urged Hungarians to participate and vote "no" in Hungary's referendum on EU migrant quotas scheduled to take place on 2 October. A survey of the KMAT presented at the meeting found that Hungarians living in minority in Hungary's neighboring countries are discriminated against, treated as "second-rate citizens" and are defenseless against assimilation. During its meeting, the KMAT adopted a joint statement on its position on Hungary's referendum, signed by the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT), the Szekler National Council (SZNT), the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (EMNP), the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP), the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP), the Hungarian Democratic Party of Vojvodina (VMDP), the Hungarian Democratic Community in Vojvodina (HMDK), the Hungarian Self-Governing National Community in Muravidék, the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Croatia (HMDK) and the Cultural Association of Hungarians of Transcarpathia (KMKSZ).



State Secretary Árpád János Potápi holds talks with the leaders of the MKP in Pozsony

State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi held talks with the recently elected leaders of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) in Pozsony/Bratislava, and attended the opening ceremony of the Hungarian College in Pozsony. With the leaders of the MKP, the state secretary discussed the most important current issues in the field of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad, among them, Slovakian Hungarians' participation in Hungary's quota referendum. Mr. Potápi stressed that beside the strong relations between the V4 countries, relations between Hungary and Slovakia have also started to improve and the cooperation between the two countries is based on mutual confidence. The head of the MKP József Menyhárt said that one of the unsolved issues of the Hungarian community in Slovakia is the situation of small schools. Although Slovakia's law on the minimal number of children in a class was amended, the financing of small Hungarian schools have not been settled yet. In connection with this issue, Mr. Potápi said that in the beginning of 2016, the Hungarian Government decided to allocate HUF 1 billion (EUR 3.2 million) for Hungarians schools in Slovakia which are in "danger." After the talks with the representatives of the MKP, the state secretary attended the institution and semester opening ceremony of the Pozsony Hungarian College which started its



operation in September this year. In addition to providing accommodation for Hungarian students studying in the city, the institution will also organize seminars, lectures and debates for its members, and will conduct managerial and other training courses. Mr. Potápi said upon speaking about the college that the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad provided a grant of HUF 25 million (EUR 81,000) for the establishment of the institution.

The Party of the Hungarian Community initiates Hungarian-Hungarian dialogue in Slovakia

Soon after the election of the new leaders of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP), the MKP decided to initiate a Hungarian-Hungarian dialogue in Slovakia. On Saturday, in a meeting held in Naszvad/Nesvady, the national council of the party decided to convene the Hungarian Advocacy and Consultative Council which intends to be a forum of cooperation and dialogue between Hungarians in Slovakia. The president of the MKP József Menyhárt said that "their aim is to provide a vision for the Hungarian community in Slovakia." He added that the most important issues to be discussed are questions in the field of economy, education and culture.



The first students take their places at the Europa College in Újvidék

The first students have taken their places at the new Europa College in Újvidék/Novi Sad. The students who were admitted to the institution after their successful participation in the tender of the Hungarian National Council (MNT) took their places in the dormitory on Sunday. Speaking at the ceremony, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) and president of the Vojvodina Provincial House of Representatives István Pásztor said that the most important task of politics and public life is to ensure a future for Hungarian young people living in the region. Mr. Pásztor said that the Europa College is able to meet this target. The official ceremony was also attended by Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Péter Szilágyi who ensured the Hungarian community in Vojvodina that Hungary would continue to support them, as well as the Europa College in Újvidék.



Rákóczi Association: school enrollment scholarships are handed over in Transcarpathia

On 26 and 27 September, 173 Hungarian first grader school children will receive scholarship from the Rákóczi Association as part of the association's school enrollment program. In a statement, the Rákóczi Association said that the program started in 2004 and its aim is to persuade Hungarian parents in neighboring countries to choose a Hungarian-language school for their children, thus, to contribute to the permanence and prosperity of the Hungarian community in its homeland. The



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program began in Slovakia, and – seeing its success – the organizers expanded it to other neighboring regions as well: Transylvania, Vojvodina and Transcarpathia, where Hungarians live in a great number but assimilation became stronger in recent years.

