

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Árpád János Potápi announces a call for applications for Hungarian organizations abroad

Speaking at a press conference in Budapest, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi announced a call for applications for Hungarian civil organizations and church legal entities abroad worth about HUF 1 billion (EUR 3.2 million), aimed at supporting Hungarian culture and education outside Hungary. Presenting the details, the state secretary said that the main purpose of the tender is to support cultural, educational and research programs abroad, print and electronic media, publishing, and the operation of educational, child welfare, cultural and social institutions maintained by church legal entities.

Representatives of Hungarian ministries discuss the situation of Hungarian Sunday schools in the diaspora

The leaders of the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office held talks with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Human Capacities on the situation of Hungarian Sunday schools in the diaspora. Speaking at the meeting, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi recalled that on 30 November 2016 the members of the Hungarian Diaspora Council adopted a strategic document entitled "Hungarian diaspora policy – Strategic directions". He said that, according to a survey presented in this document, there are 210 Hungarian Sunday schools in the diaspora which should be developed. Mr. Potápi highlighted two potential directions for these schools' development. He said that on the one hand they should be integrated into Hungary's education system, and on the other hand they should be integrated into the education system of host countries. The parties agreed that on the basis of the objectives and tasks laid down in the strategic document, the relevant representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Human Capacities will set up a working group which will draw up a development plan.



Hunor Kelemen criticizes the Romanian government, and seeks to defend the rule of law

Speaking at a conference, the chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that the institutions ensuring the framework of the rule of law should be strengthened in Romania, since if the rule of law is violated, national minorities might be exposed to infringements. Mr. Kelemen stressed that for years the RMDSZ has been reiterating that there are problems with the operation of the Romanian justice system, and more and more information confirms that in recent years the judiciary in Romania has been "tightly controlled" and used for dispensing political retribution. He stressed that in the new parliamentary term the RMDSZ will work on expanding the rights of national



minorities and strengthening the rule of law in Romania. Mr. Kelemen also expressed the hope that the cooperation agreement that the RMDSZ has concluded with the Social Liberal government coalition will be fruitful, and they will have an opportunity to discuss the expansion of minority rights during the spring parliamentary session.

Liviu Dragnea: the possibility of the adoption of the draft law on Szeklerland's autonomy did not even emerge

The chairman of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and president of the House of Representatives Liviu Dragnea said that "there is no chance that the Romanian government will adopt the draft law on the territorial autonomy of Szeklerland." Mr. Dragnea was answering journalists' questions in connection with the draft law on Szeklerland autonomy which was prepared by the Szekler National Council (SNZT) as a citizens' initiative, and which was published in Romania's Official Gazette last week. Mr. Dragnea said that the PSD and its liberal coalition partner will reject the draft law without a moment's hesitation, since they consider it unconstitutional. He added that he deeply regrets that such initiatives exist, as they cause tension in a part of the country's population and lead to an atmosphere which is "not too positive".

The draft law on Szeklerland's territorial autonomy was prepared by a ten-member committee set up by the Gyergyószék Szekler Council, who intend to submit it to the Romanian parliament as a citizens' initiative. The text of the draft law was submitted in November 2016.



Young Hungarian entrepreneurs in Slovakia hold inaugural meeting

Hungarian entrepreneurs in Slovakia held a conference in Révkomárom/Komárno, during which the Association of Hungarian Entrepreneurs in Slovakia was established. The event was addressed by Ambassador of Hungary to Pozsony/Bratislava Éva Czibalmosné Molnár, who said that the association set up at the conference is young people's positive answer to demographic problems and the dangers of emigration. The ambassador added that the Hungarian community in Slovakia needs this sense of responsibility in order to form a vision. She added that in Hungary's Fundamental Law it is declared that Hungary bears responsibility for Hungarian communities abroad, and the strengthening of economic relations is an important element in this. The head of department of strategic planning and information at the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad Orsolya Milován spoke about the results of the "2016 - year of young Hungarian entrepreneurs abroad", and encouraged the conference participants to "recognize their real force in the economic life of Southern Slovakia." Ms. Milován added that as part of the program a survey was prepared on young Hungarian entrepreneurs in the Carpathian Basin, which suggests that there are 12,000 young Hungarian entrepreneurs in Slovakia, 60 percent of whom are not planning to leave their



homeland, but would like to live and work there. Ms. Milován added that the Hungarian government's aim is to help these young people in their efforts.

“Cold Days” are commemorated in Újvidék

Speaking at a commemoration on the 75th anniversary of the so-called “Cold Days” (the 1942 raid in Újvidék/Novi Sad), the President of the Republic of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić said that “the strength of both the individual and society lies in forgiveness, but we must never forget historic events, in order to prevent their recurrence.” Addressing the commemoration held at the memorial to the victims – a statue group entitled “Family”, which stands on the bank of the Danube – the President said that “wounds suffered 75 years ago should be healed with forgiveness, reconciliation and a sincere faith that wickedness and insanity will not be repeated.” Between 21 and 23 January 1942 members of the Hungarian Defense Forces killed innocent residents of Újvidék during a raid originally launched against Serbian partisans. The victims were mainly of Serbian, Jewish and Roma origin.

Ukrainian MPs submit a “very strict” language law

Some Ukrainian MPs – including representatives of pro-government parties – submitted a “very strict” draft language law to the Ukrainian parliament, on the basis of which “disrespectful behavior towards the Ukrainian language” could be punished with criminal prosecution and imprisonment of up to three years. The draft law – which would make the use of the Ukrainian language obligatory in every field of life – was signed by more than thirty MPs. Meanwhile the education department of the county of Transcarpathia sent a circular mail to educational offices of the county's districts which have Hungarian populations and the deputy directors of Hungarians schools, calling on them to set up a list of teachers working in the schools concerned, indicating the level of their knowledge of the Ukrainian language. The head of the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Transcarpathia (KMPSZ) Ildikó Orosz said that the KMPSZ finds this measure outrageous. She added that it is abhorrent that the submission of the draft language law aimed at the restriction of national minority rights has been followed by such a “cynical letter”. Last week the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (ET) adopted a resolution after a debate held on Ukraine's country report, in which the Council of Europe declares that the rights of national minorities in Ukraine must not be restricted. In connection with this issue, Ukrainian MP and chairman of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) László Brenzovics said that “certain political forces” intend to restrict the use of the Hungarian language in Ukraine. He added that this is highly regrettable, since it is hard to imagine peace and stability in the country if the rights of people of non-Ukrainian nationality – who constitute 25% of the population – are ignored.