

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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The “2017 – year of Hungarian family businesses abroad” starts on 24 February

The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad has announced that the “2017 – year of Hungarian family businesses abroad” program will start on 24 February. The thematic year will include different programs, including research and a Carpathian Basin road show with the participation of professional partners. At its plenary session held on 1 December 2016, the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) decided to declare 2017 the year of Hungarian family businesses abroad. The opening event of the thematic year will be held on 23-25 February in Balatonalmádi. During the opening conference, family businesses from Hungary and neighboring countries will have an opportunity to meet, share experience and ideas and build relationships.

The FUEN wins lawsuit on the issue of the Minority SafePack

The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad has announced that the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) won a lawsuit at the Court of Justice of the European Union – with Hungary’s government intervention – on the issue of the Minority SafePack European citizens’ initiative. A citizens’ committee consisting of the members of the FUEN prepared the Minority SafePack initiative in 2013 and submitted it to the European Commission in order to call on the European Union to improve the protection of national and linguistic minorities and strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in the European Union. The European Commission refused to register the initiative, stating that it fell “manifestly outside the framework of the Commission’s powers”. The FUEN challenged the resolution of the European Commission at the Court of Justice of the EU which annulled the resolution in its verdict issued on Friday.



Demonstrations throughout Romania against the Government’s emergency decree

On Tuesday the Romanian government adopted an emergency decree with immediate effect amending the Romanian Criminal Code which includes a changed definition of official misconduct. According to several Romanian newspapers, the adopted legal amendments were a “catastrophe”, and Romanian President Klaus Iohannis also stated that it was “a day of mourning for the rule of law” in Romania. Since Tuesday hundreds of thousands of people have been demonstrating in towns and cities across Romania against a highly controversial emergency decree that decriminalizes official misconduct. Eventually the Romanian Social Liberalist government led by Sorin Grindeanu repealed the decree in response to the pressure of the protests. In connection with the decision, the chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that the Government was right to



withdraw the decree. He added that “a country cannot be ruled by emergency decrees.” Mr. Kelemen stressed, however, that the decision about the withdrawal of the decree only corrects the Government’s mistake, and does not solve the problem, since more than 40 articles of the Criminal Code continue to be unconstitutional. Mr. Kelemen added that the RMDSZ wants a country based on the rule of law and unequivocal laws, and in order to realize this the Criminal Code must be amended after a large-scale debate.

The Prefect of Kovászna County launches 38 lawsuits against Hungarian symbols

Speaking at a press conference in Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, the Prefect of Kovászna/Kovasna County Sebastian Cucu said that since 2012 his office has launched 38 lawsuits against certain municipalities and the county’s local government because of the “unlawful” use of Hungarian signs and the Szekler flag. He said that his office has won all of these lawsuits. The Prefect added that these lawsuits could have been avoided if local governments had complied with the law. He added that the lawsuits were only consequences of violations of the law. Mr. Cucu stressed that “the only thing we are interested in is the rule of law. If the flags had been used lawfully and signs had been installed in a correct way, we would not have taken any steps.”



Péter Szilágyi: János Esterházy is an outstanding example of acting commitment

In Rimaszombat/Rimavská Sobota, speaking at the opening ceremony of the assembly of the Hungarian Scout Association in Slovakia (SZMCS) which marked the 60th anniversary of martyr János Esterházy’s passing away, Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister’s Office Dr. Péter Szilágyi said that “János Esterházy is an outstanding example of acting commitment”, adding that “action and the living strength of cohesion has a great role in the activity of Hungarian scouts in Slovakia.” Addressing the event, the deputy state secretary praised the role of the SZMCS in the preservation of Hungarian identity and community in Slovakia. He stressed that the Hungarian Government recognizes the results and efforts of the scout association, thus, it stands by the association which belongs to the institutions of national importance. Mr. Szilágyi added that a sign of this support is that Hungary will increase the amount of assistance provided for Hungarian scouts in Slovakia.

Two Hungarian-language schools in Gúta will be merged

According to the decision of the representatives of the municipality of Gúta/Kolárno, two Hungarian-language elementary schools in the town will be merged. In addition to the two concerned Hungarian schools, the town also has a Slovak and a Hungarian-



language religious elementary school. The idea of the schools' merging caused debate in the town. One of the main arguments against the merging was that it might lead to the closing of the school, while the supporters of the plan said that after this change the town will have a stronger and more competitive educational institution. Before the meeting of municipality's representatives, the vice-president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) responsible for education policy Beáta Kiss issued a statement on behalf of her party stating the MKP finds it unacceptable that two Hungarian schools will be merged in a town where it is not justified neither economically, nor on the basis of the number of students.



Three Hungarian parties hold meeting in Újvidék

On the initiative of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ), a three-party meeting was held in Újvidék/Novi Sad with the participation of the VMSZ, the Hungarian Democratic Party of Vojvodina (VMDP) and the Party of Hungarian Unity (MEP). The delegations of the parties discussed current political issues, including the approaching presidential election. The three Hungarian parties agreed that – bearing in mind the interests of the Hungarian community – they will develop a common position concerning the Serbian presidential election.



The KMKSZ and the UMDSZ collect signatures against the planned restriction of national minority rights in Ukraine

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. Ms. Orosz said that the KMPSZ had highlighted several times that it would be necessary to reform the evaluation of the education and knowledge of students studying in nationality schools, but in order to realize this, a methodological approach should be applied instead of a political one. Some days before the circular mail was sent, a "very strict" draft language law had been submitted to the Ukrainian parliament which would make the use of the Ukrainian language obligatory in every field of life. In response to the events of the recent days, the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDSZ) started to collect signatures as an expression of protest against the planned restriction of the educational and linguistic rights of national minorities in Ukraine.



Hungarian house speaker unveils memorial to 1956 revolution in Mexico

The Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly László Kövér unveiled a memorial dedicated to the heroes of the Hungarian revolution and freedom fight in 1956 at the Hungarian Embassy in Mexico City. The memorial was sculpted by Pál Kepenyés, a Hungarian artist living in Mexico, who spent several years in prison during the Stalinist rule before 1956 and took an active part in the revolution. Addressing the ceremony, Mr. Kövér said that the memory of the revolution and freedom fight which took place 60 years ago takes a special place in every Hungarian's heart. He added that the "spirit, purity and tragedy of the revolution serve as an example throughout the world and many people consider it the symbol of uncompromising desire for freedom."

