

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

12/2017



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

NPKI | RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR HUNGARIAN
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Hungarians commemorate March 15 in the kin-state and abroad

Last week Hungarians living in the kin-state and abroad held commemorations and celebrations everywhere marking the 169th anniversary of the 1848/49 Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight.

The central commemoration in Hungary was held in Budapest and was addressed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. To mark the national holiday, the Prime Minister sent greetings to his Hungarian compatriots beyond the borders. The message was read out at local celebrations in a number of settlements in the Carpathian Basin. In his message, Mr. Orbán stressed that “This day 169 years ago made us realize that only with one heart and one will can we move forward on the path that leads to the rise of the whole nation. We Hungarians are proud that on 15 March 1848 we gained our freedom in a bloodless revolution. But we believe it was an even greater feat that when we had to defend our newly-won rights we rose to our feet as one.” The Prime Minister highlighted that “in the past few years we have built a strong and stable motherland which is able to help the advancement of Hungarian communities in their native lands in the Carpathian Basin. It is up to us whether, by taking advantage of the chance that we have been given, we realize the dreams of our heroes of '48 with our unity and perseverance.”

On 15 March several commemorations were held by Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin and the diaspora. State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi spent the national holiday among Hungarian communities in Canada. Addressing 15 March commemorations in Vancouver and Edmonton, Mr. Potápi stressed that the Hungarian government pays particular attention to the Hungarian diaspora. He stressed that it was a pleasure for him to see that Hungarians living far from the kin-state have not forgotten their homeland, the country of their ancestors, and are still committed to Hungary and the Hungarian culture.



Zsolt Semjén: the permanence of Hungarians abroad depends on progress in autonomy

Speaking at a presentation of the latest volumes in the publication entitled Minority Rights, Interest Representation, Autonomy held in Budapest, the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad said that the permanence of Hungarian communities abroad depends on their ability to make progress towards autonomy. The event was organized by the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI) and the Századvég Foundation. The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that cooperation between the fields of science, public administration and politics is essential for the permanence of Hungarians living outside Hungary. He said that if any of these fields is absent, the ability of Hungarians abroad to assert their interests will weaken. Mr. Semjén emphasized that Hungarian interests can only be defended abroad if Hungarian parties have representation in the



given country's parliament, in local governments or if roles are assumed within their current countries' governments. He said that for ethnic Hungarians autonomy was both a goal and a vision for the future and stressed that Hungarians living outside the kin-state must never give up their endeavors for autonomy. The Deputy Prime Minister reiterated that every Hungarian community abroad must prepare its own concept for autonomy, since there is no unified principle in this field. He added that Budapest does not intend to tell Hungarians abroad what is good for their community, but the Hungarian government is ready to ensure any form of help for the realization of these autonomy concepts.

The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad condemns the “excesses” of the DNA

The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad issued a statement condemning the “excesses” of the Romanian Anti-corruption Directorate (DNA) and the judicial proceedings it has launched against the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Roman Catholic Theological High School of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş. In its statement the state secretariat underlines that in a country based on the rule of law it is unacceptable for prosecutors to interrogate people about religious affiliation or challenge them because they have enrolled their children in a church school. In its statement, the state secretariat expressed its agreement with those Transylvanian Hungarian politicians who believe that the issue of the Roman Catholic High School of Marosvásárhely is a further step by the Romanian authorities aimed at restricting of the rights of Transylvanian Hungarians. The state secretariat also underlined that the Hungarian government stands by the persecuted Hungarian teachers, students and parents who – despite the DNA's proceedings – are continuing their fight for their school and their rights.

As has been reported, in November 2016 the DNA brought József Zsolt Tamás, the director of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Roman Catholic High School of Marosvásárhely, under official supervision on suspicion of abuse of office and has launched criminal proceedings against him. The Romanian public prosecutor's office also arrested the chief superintendent of Maros county Ştefan Someşan on suspicion of abuse of office and two counts of exceeding his power. Both actions were in connection with the establishment of the school. As a result of the proceedings and the school's uncertain legal situation, in February 2017 the education inspectorate of Maros County decided to stop the enrollment of new students to the school. Last week the parents of the school's students held demonstrations in front of the prefect's office in Marosvásárhely.

On the initiative of the State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi, who spent the 15 March national holiday among Hungarian communities in Canada, Hungarians living in Edmonton adopted a similar statement on Sunday, expressing their solidarity with the teachers and students of the Marosvásárhely High School. The statement was first signed by the St. Emeric Accredited Hungarian Language School of Edmonton and – as Mr. Potápi announced –



will be sent to all the 212 Hungarian schools in the diaspora. The aim of the action is to involve every Hungarian weekend school in the world in a joint protest against Romanian authorities' actions against the Hungarian Catholic school of Marosvásárhely and the Hungarian community in Transylvania.

The Road Show of the Year of Hungarian Family Businesses Abroad starts in Szabadka

The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad has announced that the Carpathian Basin road show of the thematic year "2017 – Year of Hungarian Family Businesses Abroad" will start on 22 March in Vojvodina's Szabadka/Subotica. At the first stop of the road show, the participants will have an opportunity to meet with the representatives of the "Association for Responsible Family Businesses in Hungary" (Felelős Családi Vállalatokért Magyarországon Egyesület) and attend useful workshops on how to operate family businesses successfully. The 2017 thematic year was officially opened by State Secretary Árpád János Potápi on 24 February in Balatonalmádi. In addition to the road show, the thematic year will include various programs: special training courses, conferences and research work.

Carpathian Basin economic conference and exhibition held for the first time

On Thursday, a Carpathian Basin economic conference and exhibition was held in Hajdúszoboszló for the first time. The conference was addressed by State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Levente Magyar, who said that since the fall of communism, many efforts have been made to strengthen the economy in the Carpathian Basin, but no one has done as much for this aim as the Hungarian government. He said that "from the HUF 150 billion (EUR 486 million) state support the Hungarian government ensures for economic development in the Carpathian Basin, unprecedented developments will be realized in Hungarian-populated areas in neighboring countries." The conference was also attended by the leaders of Hungarian organizations abroad, including the chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor, the president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Menyhárt and the chairman of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) László Brenzovics.



The RMDSZ presents a list of 12 demands of Transylvanian Hungarians

On 15 March, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) published a list on its website about the twelve main demands of the Hungarian community in Transylvania. The first one is the adoption of a new constitution which recognizes the Hungarian community in Romania as a nation-building factor. The second point



demands the realization of the rule of law in Romania: the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers and compliance with the existing laws. The third point proposes the adoption of an interethnic agreement which could ensure the long-term peaceful co-existence of Romanians and Hungarians in the country. The fourth point demands that the constitutions declare that Romania is a multilingual and multicultural country. The fifth point of the list asks for the full guarantee of personal and community rights, while the sixth one demands the recognition of Hungarian as a second official language in Transylvania and the free use of Hungarian symbols.



Transcarpathian Hungarians submit signatures against Ukraine's planned language laws

The chairman of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) László Brenzovics and the head of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDSZ) László Zubánics presented 65,000 signatures collected against Ukraine's planned language laws and presented them to the governor of Transcarpathia Hennadiy Moskal, in the presence of the representatives of Transcarpathia's Hungarian historic churches. The governor ensured the leaders of Hungarian organizations of his support. The heads of the KMKSZ and the UMDSZ said that the collection of the signatures was a huge success and showed the unity and strength of Hungarians living in the region. In addition to the signatures, which were collected in 112 towns, Mr. Brenzovics also submitted a letter to the governor in which the KMKSZ and UMDSZ express their protest against the draft language laws and the planned educational reforms which would both restrict the rights of national minorities. The head of the KMKSZ asked the governor to send the letter of Transcarpathian Hungarians to the country's leaders.

