

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE  
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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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## Zsolt Semjén: Every element of assistance system for Hungarians living abroad is fully functional

On Tuesday, Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén announced that the assistance system for Hungarians living abroad is complete and all of its elements are operating. The Deputy Prime Minister also reported that there are now 950,000 new Hungarian citizens, due to the simplified naturalization procedure. Speaking at his annual hearing before the Committee of National Cohesion of the Hungarian National Assembly, Mr. Semjén said that when a new program is introduced on the basis of standard criteria, it takes place in a carefully considered manner. He added that “However, if there is no strong economic growth, the availability of financial grants is questionable”, and highlighted the predictable and deliberate economic support provided for Hungarians living abroad. Mr. Semjén said that the funding provided for Hungarians living outside the kin-state was HUF 9 billion in 2009 and this sum increased to HUF 89 billion last year. The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that the Hungarian government is providing unprecedented financial support for economic players beyond the borders. He added that the economic development program started with Vojvodina, it was then extended to Transcarpathia, and it is now being extended to the entire Carpathian Basin. Mr. Semjén also spoke about the thematic years of the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad, as well as the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor and the Petőfi Sándor Programs, describing them as extremely successful initiatives.

Speaking at the event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister’s Office Árpád János Potápi said that the Hungarian population in the Carpathian Basin is around 12 to 13 million, and there are some 2.5 million Hungarians living in diaspora. He stressed that “it is therefore necessary to lay continuous emphasis on diaspora policy which the Hungarian government did after the change of paradigm in Hungary’s policy for Hungarian communities abroad after 2010.”

## Árpád János Potápi: the NYEOMSZSZ is an important player in policy for Hungarian communities abroad

The Western European Association of Hungarian Country Organizations (NYEOMSZSZ) held its assembly in Budapest on Saturday. Speaking at a press conference held after the meeting, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the NYEOMSZSZ has always played an important role in the formation of policy for Hungarian communities abroad, providing important guidelines and instructions. The state secretary stressed that the operation of this field would be much more difficult without this organization. Mr. Potápi also expressed the hope that the NYEOMSZSZ, which is a 16-year-old umbrella organization uniting Hungarian communities in Western Europe, will continue this role and will contribute to the success of the field. The state secretary also announced that the assembly of the NYEOMSZSZ had re-elected Ernő Deák (Austria) president of



the organization, while Szabolcs Bihari (Sweden) and Kornél Klement (Germany) became vice-presidents. Speaking after his reelection, Ernő Deák said that “it was a great success that over 16 years the heterogeneous and scattered Hungarian communities living in Western Europe have been successfully united and it is a source of pride that the Hungarian government considers the NYEOMSZSZ its partner.”

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### Zsolt Semjén: Hungary is ready to put its intergovernmental relations with Romania on a new footing

The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) held its congress on Saturday in Zilah/Zalău. The conference was also attended by the head of Romania’s ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) Liviu Dragnea. Addressing the event, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén said that Hungary is ready to put its intergovernmental relations with Romania on a new footing. Mr. Semjén stressed that “Hungarian-Slovak and Hungarian-Serbian relations have not been any less ‘burdened’ than current Hungarian-Romanian relations.” Mr. Semjén added that “Hungary has since managed to make relations with those countries flourish and if Hungarians and Serbs and Hungarians and Slovaks could do that, then why couldn’t Hungarians and Romanians do it.” The Deputy Prime Minister emphasized that Hungary’s interest lies in the development of the best possible links between Romania and the Visegrád group. Mr. Semjén insisted that in every country where autonomy is offered to minorities it has been beneficial to all. If ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania accepted that they have no right to autonomy, they would become second-class citizens in Europe, he added.

Reacting to Liviu Dragne’s invitation to join the Romanian government, the chairman of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen said that “the RMDSZ is not yet interested in government participation”. He stressed that “it is in the interest of Hungarians living in Transylvania to live in a country governed by the rule of law in which powers are separated and national minority rights exist not only in theory but also in practice.” Mr. Kelemen also expressed the hope that the pledges made in the 1918 Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia Declaration will be realized, as the centenary is approaching and Romania will recognize the Hungarian community as a factor in creation of the state.

### Hungarians celebrate Saint Ladislaus in Nagyvárad

On Sunday a pilgrimage was held in Nagyvárad/Oradea to mark the 825th anniversary of the canonization of King Saint Ladislaus of Hungary. On this great occasion the relics of the king were transported from Győr to their original venue, Nagyvárad. Speaking after the Holy Mass, Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén described Saint Ladislaus as a symbol of the unity of Christianity, the Hungarian people and European identity. He said that



in his life Ladislaus had demonstrated that “not only are national devotion and Christianity not opposed to one another, but they are dependent on each other.” Mr. Semjén stressed that national sovereignty and Christian evangelization were especially important ideas today “when Western Europe is disowning its Christian roots.”

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### Minority Cultural Fund to be established in Slovakia

The Slovakian Parliament has decided to establish a Minority Cultural Fund in Slovakia in order to coordinate financial support for national minorities. The Minority Cultural Fund – which will start its operation on 1 July – will partly replace the current assistance system, therefore, in the future Slovakia will finance minority culture in the framework of an assistance system operating under the government office. Instead of the current EUR 4.5 million, the fund will receive EUR 8 million from the central state budget. Concerning the adoption of the law, vice-president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) responsible for cultural and educational issues Beáta Kiss said that the increase of the amount of support allocated for minority cultural projects is a positive result, however, the establishment of the Minority Cultural Fund will not realize cultural self-determination in Slovakia.

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### Hungary takes part in the Újvidék International Agricultural Fair

On Saturday, opening the Hungarian pavilion at the International Agricultural Fair in Újvidék/Novi Sad, Hungarian Minister of Agriculture Sándor Fazekas said that – as part of the Hungarian Government’s economic development program in Vojvodina – Hungary is present at the event with a high number of exhibitors. The minister stressed that Serbia and Hungarians living in Vojvodina are extremely important partners for Hungary. He added that the main aim of the Hungarian Government’s economic development program in Vojvodina is to help Hungarian producers become successful and prosper in their homeland. Speaking at the event, the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) and president of the Provincial House of Representatives István Pásztor said that the fair was organized for the 84th time and it is expanding year by year: this year it was attended by 1,500 exhibitors from 60 countries.

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### The Rákóczi Cellar of the Munkács Castle is officially opened

On Friday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi officially opened the Rákóczi Cellar of the Munkács Castle. At the ceremony, wines of five Hungarian wine regions were presented. Speaking at the event, the state secretary said that the Munkács Castle symbolizes the history of the whole region due



to its past and historic atmosphere which is connected to not only Hungarians but other nationalities of Transcarpathia as well. Mr. Potápi stressed that the Hungarian Government considers the renovation of the Munkács Castle and the strengthening of Transcarpathia an important aim. As a result – he added – Hungary ensures considerable financial support for the region in the field of education, health care, social policy and economic development, adding that the latter became an especially important field in the recent period.

### Large-scale environmental clean-up program starts in Transcarpathia

Speaking at a press conference in Beregszász/Berehove, government commissioner responsible for the development of Hungary's Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county and Transcarpathia István Grezsa announced that a large-scale environmental clean-up program has started in Transcarpathia with the Hungarian Government's HUF 14 million (EUR 45,000) support. Presenting the initiative named Clean Transcarpathia, Mr. Grezsa said that Transcarpathia is one of the most beautiful regions of the Carpathian Basin with an excellent geographical location and extremely rich natural resources, but many of its areas is covered with litter. The government commissioner stressed that the aim of their program is to incite people to unite their strength and create an environment which is worthy to local residents and their natural heritage.

