

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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The Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program is an integral part of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad

Speaking in Budapest, government commissioner responsible for the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program (KCSP) István Grezsa said that the KCSP – within which scholarship holders are sent to Hungarian diaspora communities in different parts of the world – has become an integral part of the Hungarian government’s policy for Hungarian communities abroad. Before travelling to diaspora communities, the chosen scholarship holders have to take part in a one-week educational program which is regularly held in Budapest. Opening the first day of this year’s educational week, Mr. Grezsa said that at the beginning of June, 26 young Hungarians will travel to countries in the Southern Hemisphere and two will go to North America. Mr. Grezsa recalled that the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program was launched five years ago as a government scholarship program. He added that the main task of the program is to promote Hungarian community life in the diaspora and to strengthen ties between the kin-state and Hungarians living abroad. The main mission of the program is to address Hungarians living in the diaspora, organize community and cultural life and develop the Hungarian language skills of compatriots living outside the kin-state.



The FUEN holds its 62nd congress in Kolozsvár

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) held its 62nd congress in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca. Speaking on the opening day of the event, the chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen strongly criticized the minority policy of Romania. Mr. Kelemen stressed that “Bucharest is continually declaring that minority issues in Romania have been solved and the country’s minority policy is exemplary. In contrast to this, we think that nothing is solved.” Welcoming the conference in a letter, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén congratulated the FUEN on its European Citizens' Initiative – called “Minority SafePack” – and stressed that “it is high time to discuss the issue of national minorities at a European level.” Mr. Semjén highlighted that the European Commission has recognized that “this is a joint issue” which concerns not only minorities but every citizen and Member State of the European Union. Addressing the event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi emphasized that Hungary is standing up for the rights of national minorities at international forums. He added that “this is why Hungary joined the lawsuit against the European Commission on the side of the plaintiffs, which resulted in the partial registration of the

At Bánffy Castle in Bonchida/Bonțida on Friday, as part of the FUEN congress, the submitters of the Minority SafePack solemnly signed the initiative. This step marked the official start of the collection of the necessary one million supporting signatures. Speaking at the event, the president of the FUEN Loránt Vincze said that the slogan



for the next year might be “Minorities Enrich Europe.” He stressed that it is important to convince institutions and majority nations that through the supporting of the initiative they might also contribute to a better Europe.

As has been reported, the Minority SafePack European Citizens’ Initiative is a set of proposals prepared by the FUEN which suggests measures for the EU in the field of linguistic, educational and cultural issues, regional politics, media regulations and assistance policy. The initiative was first rejected by the European Commission (EC), but the negative decision was challenged at the European Court of Justice by the plaintiffs, who won the lawsuit. In March 2017 the European Commission agreed to register certain parts of the initiative. In order to make the European Commission consider the FUEN’s proposals, the initiators have one year to collect one million supporting signatures from at least seven European countries.

The Day of Reformed Unity is held in Nagyvárád

On Saturday, the Day of Reformed Unity was held at the renovated castle of Nagyvárád/Oradea. The ceremony was attended by every bishop of the Reformed Church from the Carpathian Basin. Speaking at the outdoor ceremony, the Bishop of the Danubian Reformed Church District István Bogárdi Szabó said that the injunction in the Bible to “Guard the fortress” means that we must guard and protect our castle not only in a physical sense but also spiritual sense, and we must seek the grace of God. Addressing the event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the role of the Reformation was key in the spiritual awakening which is necessary for Hungarians to be able to carry out their tasks.

Hungarian government to also extend its economic development programs to Transylvania

Following Vojvodina and Subcarpathia, the Hungarian government is also extending to Transylvania its economic development programs aimed at strengthening Hungarian communities. The launch of the first model program – with a budget of HUF 1 billion (EUR 3.2 million) – was announced in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş on Friday by Levente Magyar, State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The state secretary stressed that “This is not a temporary measure; from now on this funding, which serves the economic strengthening of Hungarian communities, will be one of the stable pillars of the Hungarian government’s policy for Hungarian communities abroad”. Mr. Magyar expressed his firm belief that 2017 will be a historic milestone year for the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. He added that based on the Vojvodina model where the total sum of funding has now exceeded HUF 50 billion (EUR 161 million), in the long term the Transylvanian economic development program will reach an amount of some one hundred billion forints.



First trilingual place name signs are installed in Kolozsvár

After several years of wrangling, the first trilingual (Romanian, Hungarian and German) place name signs were installed in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca, at the entry to the town from the direction of Nagyvárad/Oradea. Reacting to the move, the deputy mayor of the town Emese Oláh said that the original aim had been to install trilingual place name signs at every entry and exit to the town by the beginning of the FUEC congress – which started on Wednesday in Kolozsvár; so far, however, only one of these has been officially approved. Ms. Oláh added that she had not experienced any opposition in the mayoral office to installing the place name signs, but she sees that “Romanian nationalists have put considerable pressure on the town’s mayor Emil Boc, because he has agreed to the implementation of this.”



Use of minority languages: warning is sent to 578 towns

In recent days Slovakia’s commissioner for minority affairs László Bukovszky has sent warning letters to 578 towns in Slovakia, in which he called on them to comply with legal regulations on the use of minority languages. The majority of violations were found in visual language use. Last year the commissioner sent a questionnaire to 656 municipalities and dozens of administrative entities – district offices, departments of social affairs and tax offices – on the basis of which a report was made presenting the situation of minority language use in Slovakia. The questionnaire was sent only to those municipalities and towns which fall within the scope of the law: which operate in territories where the ratio of a certain national minority is at least 20% of the local population. The results of the survey show that 1,500 violations were found in territories which fall under the jurisdiction of local or county municipalities: these are practices which violate the law on minority language use. Almost 200 violations by public entities were observed, in connection with which the commissioner held talks with the representatives of the affected offices or ministries.



The KMKSZ condemns provocations against the Transcarpathian Hungarian community

On Saturday, at its assembly in Beregszász/Berehove, the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) issued a statement condemning provocations over the weekend which were targeted against the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. In its statement the KMKSZ highlighted that over the weekend unknown perpetrators had installed signs in the Beregszász/Berehove and Nagyszőlős/ Vinohradiv district of the region with incorrectly written Hungarian text. The signs were photographed and sent to Kiev news sites, stating that the signs had been installed by members of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community at the request of Transcarpathian Hungarian organizations, with the aim of indicating the



Hungarian community's demands for autonomy. In the statement it is stressed that the KMKSZ was not involved in this provocation, which it strongly condemns, calling on law enforcement authorities to investigate the issue and hold both instigators and perpetrators to account.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has talks with head of Hungarian interest representation in Muravidék

During his visit to Slovenia, Prime Minister and President of Fidesz Viktor Orbán had talks in Maribor with the head of the interest representation group for Hungarians in Muravidék/ Prekmurje. President of the Hungarian Self-Governing Ethnic Community of Muravidék Ferenc Horváth informed Mr. Orbán about the organization's activities over the past eighteen months, and thanked the Hungarian government for its support in developments which serve the interests of the local Hungarian community. The parties were pleased to confirm that there is a great deal of interest in the joint economic development plan, the funding for which will be fully utilized in the first round, as expected. The President of the Hungarian interest representation in Slovenia also provided information on preparations for the György Zala Memorial Year: a cultural program of special significance for the Hungarian community in Muravidék.