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Viktor Orbán: Unification of the nation to be followed by building of the nation

Speaking at the 16th Plenary Session of the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) – the highest level institutionalized forum for Hungarians living in the kin-state and Hungarian communities living outside Hungary – held in Budapest’s Castle Garden Bazaar on Friday, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that the recent period has focused on unification of the nation, while the years ahead will focus on building the nation. The Prime Minister reiterated words from a speech he delivered recently in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca, saying that “in the Carpathian Basin the future will be written in Hungarian”. He stressed that this sentence expresses the intentions of the Government, as it sees the Carpathian Basin as the physical space for the fulfilment of the Hungarian nation and culture. Mr. Orbán added that he is convinced that “we shall be able to significantly influence” the future of the Carpathian Basin by linking together the elements of the Hungarian nation. He said that in the region everyone can see that those who cooperate with the Hungarians are themselves beneficiaries. He said that the Hungarian national interest dictates that Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovakia and Ukraine should all be strong, and that Hungary should develop fruitful relations with them as a similarly strong country. Mr. Orbán also said that without a strong motherland, it would be impossible to pursue successful foreign policy in relation to areas beyond the borders in which Hungarians live. He stated that the motherland has gained in strength. In his speech the Prime Minister enthusiastically welcomed what he described as a consensus on important issues relating to Hungarians beyond the borders, such as citizenship, voting rights and aspirations for autonomy. Speaking about the new legislation on education in Ukraine, Mr. Orbán said that the Hungarian government will not retreat from the position that minority rights cannot be curtailed. Hungary is asking the Ukrainian government to also acknowledge this, he said, because if it fails to adopt fundamental norms, the quality of cooperation between Kiev and the EU will be utterly changed.

Zsolt Semjén: the Minority SafePack European citizens' initiative should be supported with the most possible signatures

The 16th session of the Hungarian Standing Conference (MAERT) unanimously adopted its closing declaration on Friday. The statement defines the Minority SafePack European citizens' initiative as a priority. Speaking at a press conference held after the session of the MÁÉRT, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén said that the initiative – which is calling upon the European Union to improve the protection of persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities and strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in the Union – should be supported with the most possible signatures in Hungary, its neighboring countries and the Hungarian diaspora. The participants of the MÁÉRT also protested against the recently adopted Ukrainian education law that violated European norms



by restricting minority education rights. The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that the members of the MÁÉRT unanimously rejected the recent proposal by Hungarian opposition DK leader Ferenc Gyurcsány that dual Hungarian citizens living in another country should be stripped of their voting rights in Hungary. According to the decision of the MÁÉRT, 2018 will be the thematic year of Hungarian families abroad. It was also agreed that 2018 would be a memorial year for medieval Hungary's King Matthias Corvinus.

The members of the Hungarian Diaspora Council express solidarity with Transcarpathian Hungarians

On 9 November, the Hungarian Diaspora Council held its 7th Plenary Session in Budapest. The event was attended by 91 Hungarian diaspora organizations. In the closing declaration adopted at the end of the meeting, the members of the Hungarian Diaspora Council expressed their solidarity with Transcarpathian Hungarians whose rights to mother tongue education have been seriously violated by the new Ukrainian Act on Education as well as with the teachers and students of the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Theological High School of Marosvásárhely/ Târgu Mureş. The members of the council considered the process of the simplified naturalization procedure successful. They also expressed their commitment to encourage the registration of Hungarians living abroad for Hungary's 2018 parliamentary elections.

Zsolt Semjén: Programs already under way to continue, we have one millionth new citizen

Speaking at a press conference after the 7th Plenary Session of the Hungarian Diaspora Council (an independent forum of organizations for Hungarians throughout the world), Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén said that "the programs which serve to support Hungarian communities living in the diaspora will continue steadily and we have our one millionth new Hungarian citizens." Zsolt Semjén highlighted that the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program will continue with unchanged dynamism and with an increased budget. He added that 115 young people travelled to Hungarian diaspora communities throughout the world and 150 member organizations receive them. According to his evaluation, this is one of the most successful programs of the Hungarian Government. Mr. Semjén stressed that the emigrant organizations that may be tied to Hungary have been successfully transformed into homes for every Hungarian in the given countries. The Deputy Prime Minister told the press that the Mikes Kelemen Program, too, will continue, the purpose of which is to gather together the heritage of the Hungarian diaspora.



The chairman of the RMDSZ asks Hungarian parties to sign the Minority SafePack initiative



Speaking at a press conference after the session of the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT), the chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen asked Hungarian parties to help the promotion of the Minority SafePack European Citizens' Initiative since – as he said – it is a “national issue not a question of party politics. He stressed that one million signatures are necessary to make Europe deal with the issue of autochthonous national minorities and adopt a law to protect them. As part of the press conference, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén and State Secretary Árpád János Potápi signed the initiative in the presence of the head of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen and the president of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) Loránt Vincze. Mr. Kelemen expressed his gratitude to the members of the MÁÉRT and Hungarian organizations beyond the borders for supporting the initiative.



Árpád János Potápi: the MKP has good positions for the 2018 municipal elections

Speaking at a press conference in Budapest summing up the results of the county elections held in Slovakia on 4 November, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi said that the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) reached good results and has good positions for the 2018 municipal elections. Compared to the elections held four years ago, Slovakian government parties have reached worse results, while right wing opposition parties have strengthened their positions. Concerning the “battle” for Hungarian votes, the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) defeated the Most-Híd (Bridge) party, winning in five counties from four where Hungarians live. The only county where the Most-Híd won is the county of Kassa/Kosice. As a result, the MKP will have 33 representatives, while the Most-Híd – only 10 representatives in county councils.



Katalin Szili: We must help Hungarians abroad remain and prosper in their homeland

Prime Ministerial Commissioner and Former House Speaker Katalin Szili made an official visit to Vojvodina. During her stay in the region, Ms. Szili handed over scholarships to Hungarian students as part of the Rákóczi Association's scholarship program. The association ensures financial help for first grade pupils in towns where the ratio of the Hungarian population is under 30%. This year, 324 children received this scholarship. Speaking at the event, Ms. Szili said that it is important to help Hungarians abroad preserve their identity, and in order to realize this aim, Hungarians must be given an opportunity to study in their mother tongue and cultivate their traditions.



The leaders of the KMKSZ hold their annual conference

Speaking at the annual conference of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) held in Makkosjánosi/Yanoshi (near Beregszász/Berehove), the chairman of the association and member of the Ukrainian Parliament László Brenzovics stressed that the situation of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community has changed a lot in recent months due to the current vents in Ukraine. Mr. Brenzovics stressed that it was the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia which was the “loudest” in raising its voice against the new Ukrainian Act on Education which is restricting national minorities’ rights to mother tongue education. He stressed that it is a huge success that the KMKSZ – due to the kin-state’s help – managed to bring the issue of the new language law to international forums. Mr. Brenzovics emphasized that in the current difficult situation, the Ukrainian Government should strive to restore peace in the country instead of the restriction of civil and human rights and freedoms.

