

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

NPKI | RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR HUNGARIAN
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Zsolt Semjén: the Ukrainian education law is a brutal attack on the part of nationalist power

According to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Ukrainian education law was a brutal attack on the institutions built by the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia on the part of Ukrainian nationalist power. Zsolt Semjén said in an interview given to the public service media on the occasion of the Day of Dispersed Hungarian Communities which was also broadcast on the M1 public service television news channel that while the former approach was that the Hungarian State feels responsible for every Hungarian, the Constitution now in force lays down in black and white that the Hungarian State bears responsibility for every Hungarian. The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that this is an important change, and reflects a much stronger commitment. Mr. Semjén added that the Government honors its undertaking in every respect, among others, by granting citizenship. It is practically the Hungarian State that keeps the system of institutions operational in Transcarpathia by supplementing the salaries of physicians and teachers, contributing to the meals of young children, and supplying vaccines. Mr. Semjén said that helping “our own brothers and sisters forming part of the same nation is our natural constitutional duty”. The structure of providing assistance has, however, sustained a brutal attack, he stressed. He reiterated that Hungary fully supported the Ukrainians, and was an advocate of granting them visa-free travel. In light of this, they behaved most unfairly, and until they revoke the language legislation, the Hungarian Government will foil everything that is important for them, he underlined. Mr. Semjén said that he is grateful to “the Lord of history” for the fact that the one millionth new Hungarian, too, has taken his citizenship oath, and as a result, they adhered to the pledge they made when they entered into office. In the Carpathian Basin some 870 thousand people received Hungarian citizenship through the simplified naturalization procedure, while 132 thousand citizenship claims were granted in diaspora communities.

The second phase of the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program begins

Speaking at a press conference in Budapest, government commissioner responsible for Transcarpathia István Grezsa announced that the second phase of the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program will start with HUF 21.5 billion (EUR 68 million) as part of which 77 new kindergartens will be built and 250 institutions will be renovated by the end of 2019. The government commissioner added that nursery school development program – which is a HUF 38.5 billion program - is the Hungarian Government’s current largest project for Hungarian Communities Abroad concerning its budget. He added that the current number of children attending Hungarian nursery schools abroad is 48,000, the aim of the Hungarian Government is to increase this number to 60,000, encouraging parents of mixed marriages to choose Hungarian-language pre-school education for their children. Mr. Grezsa added that due to the



second phase of the program, 54 kindergartens will be built in Transylvania, 11 – in Slovakia, 10 – in Transcarpathia, 1-1 in Vojvodina and Austria respectively. In addition, the number of institutions which will be renovated is 50 in Transylvania, 96 in Slovakia, 59 in Transcarpathia, 6 in Vojvodina, 1 in Slovenia and 6 in Croatia.

Calls for application worth HUF 500 million are available for Hungarian diaspora communities

Speaking at a press conference in Budapest, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi announced that two new calls for application are open for Hungarian organizations and Hungarian weekend schools in the diaspora worth HUF 500 million (EUR 1.6 million). The state secretary added that the deadline for application is 15 January 2018. He added that the total amount of the call for application for diaspora organizations is HUF 300 million (EUR 960,000) as part of which financial support can be ensured for the realization of different cultural, family, church and scouts programs, written and electronic media and publishing. Within the framework of the second call for application – which is launched for Hungarian weekend schools – HUF 200 million (EUR 640,000) is available for Hungarians schools operating in the diaspora. These sums can be spent on the renting of premises for education, general operating expenses, the purchase of educational equipment, wage supplementations for teachers as well as the realization of “twinning programs” between schools in the Carpathian Basin and those in the diaspora.

Péter Szilágyi: dispersed Hungarian communities are the “bastions” of Hungarian culture

Speaking on 15 November, the Day of Dispersed Hungarian Communities in the Carpathian Basin, Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Péter Szilágyi said that “the members of dispersed Hungarian communities are the last bastions of Hungarian culture, therefore, the Hungarian Government is supporting their permanence through a range of different programs.” Addressing a round-table discussion on the situation of dispersed Hungarian communities organized by the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI), Mr. Szilágyi stressed that “Hungarians can only survive if they preserve their mother tongue.” He added that in this “battle”, Hungarians living in dispersed communities are in the most difficult situation, therefore, the kin-state must pay particular attention to them.



Hunor Kelemen: We must express our opinion bravely

The Ethics Committee of the Order of the “Star of Romania” found the president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen unsuited for holding on to the award. The decision was made after Mr. Kelemen had said that



“Hungarians have nothing to celebrate regarding the 1918 Romanian Great Union.” The emblematic figure of the 1989 Romanian revolution and Hungarian leader in Romania, László Tőkés was also deprived of his decoration in 2016. Concerning the issue, the head of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen declared that “we must express our opinion bravely even if they withdraw each of our decorations.” Mr. Kelemen added that depriving him of the decoration means that Romania is restricting freedom of speech. He added that “in the strengthening anti-Hungarian atmosphere we, Hungarians living in the 21st century have to talk very straight about who we are and what we would like to do.”

Hunor Kelemen received the “Star of Romania” in 2000 for developing Hungarian-Romanian cultural ties.

The RMDSZ celebrates the Day of Dispersed Hungarian Communities in Szamosújvár

Speaking in Szamosújvár/Gherla marking the Day of Dispersed Hungarian Communities, executive chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Bálint Porcsalmi said that “we need more work and a new style of speaking concerning dispersed Hungarian communities, avoiding negative concepts and using positive examples and success stories instead.” Mr. Porcsalmi said that on Day of Dispersed Hungarian Communities, we must “not only celebrate but work as well.” He recalled that at the 10th congress of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, the RMDSZ declared 15 November – the date of birth of Transylvanian Prince Gábor Bethlen – the Day of Dispersed Hungarian Communities in the Carpathian Basin. This year, the central event of the RMDSZ was held in Szamosújvár.



Hungarian Center for Training, Research and Culture is inaugurated in Szabadka

On Saturday, the new building of the Vojvodina Hungarian Center for Training, Research and Culture was inaugurated in Szabadka/Subotica. The event was attended by Hungarian Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog, the president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor and the head of the Hungarian National Council (MNT) Jenő Hajnal. Speaking at the event, Mr. Balog said that Opportunities must be created for strengthening Hungarian communities beyond the border and the establishment of a unified space for education in the Carpathian Basin is serving these goals. The Hungarian Government ensured HUF 400 million (EUR 1.2 million) for the project.



Ukrainian Minister of Education: nationality schools will not be closed



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DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFORMATION

Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine Lilia Hrynevych has made a two-day official visit to Transcarpathia in order to hold talks on the new Ukrainian Act on Education. During her talks, the minister stressed that nationality schools in Ukraine will not be closed, instead, students will receive more opportunities to acquire the state language. Ms. Hrynevych stressed that “there are a lot of myths concerning Article 7 of the new law which regulates the language of education in Ukraine and these myths are often used for political purposes.” She added that “nationality schools will not be closed, but the number of subjects taught in the state language will be increased from the 5th grade.” The minister added though these changes “they do not restrict but expand rights.” The head of the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) Ildikó Orosz stressed that Article 7 of the new Ukrainian Act on Education is unconstitutional and is depriving national minorities from the right to study in their mother tongue.

