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Conference marking the 25th anniversary of the Hungarian-Slovenian agreement on the protection of national minorities

On 24 November, a large-scale conference was held in Budapest marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of the agreement between Slovenia and Hungary on the protection of national minorities. The conference was attended by the Hungarian and Slovenian house speakers. Addressing the event, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi said that Slovenia is one of those neighboring countries with a kin-state policy which Hungary can endorse without problems: the majority nation and the Slovenian government do not hinder Hungary's efforts to support the Hungarian community living in the country, even though this is not the case everywhere in Europe today. The state secretary stressed that in the agreement signed 25 years ago the two countries mutually declared that they would guarantee the necessary conditions for the preservation and development of their communities' national identities. Speaking at the conference, Hungarian house speaker László Kövér said that "history has taught both Hungarians and Slovenes that identity is like freedom: no one will have more if he takes it from others." Mr. Kövér stressed that, despite their small numbers, national minorities living in Hungary and Slovenia both receive the special attention, support and positive discrimination which they enable them to exist and plan a future .

Hungarian economic development program in Transylvania begins

Speaking at a press conference in Marosvásárhely/Targue Mures, State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy Levente Magyar said that the Hungarian government will support every valid and "evaluable" tender which is submitted within the framework of the Maros-Mezőség economic development program. A pilot version of the Hungarian government's Transylvanian economic development program was announced in Mures county half a year ago. Mr. Magyar said that as part of the program, 526 entrepreneurs have submitted their applications. The state secretary expressed the hope that 90% of these applications will be supported. He added that due to this, the budget of the Transylvanian pilot program has to be increased from the initial HUF 1 billion (3.1 million) to HUF 1.5 billion (EUR 4.7 million), but it is possible. The state secretary added that the results are expected to be announced in December and the applicants could receive the support in the first months of 2018.

Hunor Kelemen: the pledges of the Gyulafehérvár decree must be guaranteed

On Saturday, speaking in Marosvásárhely/Targu Mures, the chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that "2018 might not pass without Hungarians living in Romania being subject to nationalist and anti-Hungarian outbursts." Mr. Kelemen stressed that he had never wanted to speak about the centenary of "Greater Romania" with the intention of



insulting and offending anyone, but he had never been afraid to ask questions concerning the situation of the Hungarian community. He asked what has changed over the past 100 years. The head of the RMDSZ said that the situation of the Theological High School of Marosvásárhely and court decisions on bilingual signs show that “it is always possible to step back”. Mr. Kelemen stressed that Hungary’s expectations for the centenary are to convince the majority nation of what the Hungarian national minority wants and persuade it take part in a dialog which creates a new relationship between the majority and minority nations. He added that the “the pledges of the Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia regulation must be guaranteed and included in the legislation.”



The MKP is a considerable power at national level

The National Council of the Party of the Hungarian Community held its meeting in Pozsony/Bratislava. At the meeting, the MKP evaluated the results reached at the county elections and other main events recently. After the meeting, in a statement the MKP summed up its standpoint, and the decisions of the national council, in which it stressed that work done at the level of counties is a key for the MKP to prove its strength concerning the future. According to the party, the results of county elections show that the MKP is an important power at national level as well. The MKP also expressed its gratitude to everyone who took part in preparations for the county elections and thanked its voters for their support.



Péter Szilágyi: Hungarians abroad must be provided opportunities

The Carpathian Basin road show of the “2017 – Year of Hungarian family businesses abroad” has started in Vojvodina’s Hajdújárás/Hajdukovo as part of which the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad is organizing lectures and consultations for the members of those family businesses whose applications have won in the program. The event was addressed by Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Péter Szilágyi who recalled that the State Secretariat had launched its thematic years in 2012. In the first years, education and culture was in focus but since 2014, more and more attention is paid to the economic strengthening of communities. Mr. Szilágyi added that as part of the “2017 – Year of Hungarian family businesses abroad program”, 874 applications were received from the Carpathian Basin and 185 of them were successful. He added that in Vojvodina, 43 applications were selected who altogether received HUF 220 million (EUR 690,000) from the Hungarian Government. Mr. Szilágyi expressed the hope that this support will help young entrepreneurs and family businesses remain and prosper in their homeland.



Renovated Hungarian nursery schools and vocational education developments are inaugurated in Transcarpathia

On Tuesday, government commissioner responsible for the development of Hungary's Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county and Ukraine's Transcarpathia István Grezsa inaugurated a nursery school in Ungvár/Uzhhorod which has been renovated from HUF 12 million (EUR 37,000) as part of the Hungarian Government's nursery school development program. Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Grezsa expressed the hope that due to this program a good pre-school education system might be built in Transcarpathia. He added that in the two phases of the program, 32 new kindergartens will be built and 130 institutions will be renovated from HUF 4.5 million (EUR 14 million). Mr. Grezsa added that in addition to financial assistance, Hungary is organizing different training courses and lecture for Hungarian teachers working in pre-school education in neighboring countries. The event was attended by State Secretary Árpád János Potápi who - prior to the event - handed over developments at the student hostel of the Hungarian Department of the Ungvár National University. On the first of his official visit to Transcarpathia, Mr. Potápi visited a Hungarian vocational educational institution in Makkosjánosi/Yanoshi near Beregszász/Berehove where new developments were inaugurated. Speaking at the event, the state secretary stressed the important of the strengthening of vocational education in Transcarpathia.



Hungarian-Slovenian Joint Committee on Minority Affairs holds session near Ljubljana

The Hungarian-Slovenian Joint Committee on Minority Affairs held its annual session near Ljubljana. Speaking at the event, ministerial commissioner responsible for neighborhood policy at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Hungarian co-chair of the committee Ferenc Kalmár said that the agreement between Hungary and Slovenia on the mutual protection of national minorities was signed 25 years ago. Mr. Kalmár emphasized the importance of dialogue which has been uninterrupted between Hungary and Slovenia over the past 25 years, adding that there are countries in which the joint committee on minority affairs has not been convened since 2009.

