

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE  
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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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## President János Áder signs the Minority SafePack initiative

On Friday, President of Hungary János Áder and his wife, first lady Anita Herczegh signed the Minority SafePack European Citizens' initiative. The Minority SafePack is a signature drive campaign aiming to defend and extend the rights of national minorities in Europe. One of the initiators was the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) and the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), but since then a number of organizations from all over Europe have joined. The Minority SafePack calls upon the EU to adopt a set of legal acts to improve the protection of persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities and strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in the Union. In order to oblige the European Commission to deal with the issue, the initiators have to collect 1 million signatures in the countries of the European Union by 3 April 2018. Speaking to the Hungarian news agency MTI, secretary general of the Rákóczi Association – one of the main organizers of signature collecting in Hungary – said that so far 750,000 people have signed the initiative, among them, 300,000 people in Hungary. Csongár Csáky added that the protection of national minorities' rights is extremely important since about 50 million people living in Europe belong to national minorities.



## Hunor Kelemen: pledges laid down in the Gyulafehér Declaration should be met

Speaking at a press conference in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureș, the chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that “one hundred years was not enough for Romania to “break through the Carpathian Mountains and build highways to connect Transylvania with other provinces of Romania.” The head of the RMDSZ said it was worrying that the Romanian political elite has no joint country project and vision 11 years after EU accession and – instead of building the country – Romanian politicians are “fighting with each other.” Mr. Kelemen stressed that the RMDSZ had showed willingness to have dialogue with Romanian parties on the country's joint future, however, it is possible only if the pledges laid down in Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia Declaration – which declared the merging of Transylvania and Romania – will be met. Answering journalists' questions concerning the approaching parliamentary elections in Hungary, Mr. Kelemen said he would like to encourage every Hungarian living in Romania who has Hungarian citizenship to exercise his rights and vote in the election.





## Carpathian Basin road show of the 2018 – Year of Hungarian families abroad starts in Vojvodina

On Thursday, the Carpathian Basin road show of the “2018 – Year of Hungarian families abroad” officially started. The first stop of the road show was Topolya/ Bačka Topola in Vojvodina. Speaking at the event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi expressed the hope that the programs of the Hungarian Government – especially its large-scale economic development program and thematic years – will help decrease assimilation and Hungarians’ emigration from their homeland and will encourage Hungarians return to Vojvodina. Speaking about the Hungarian Government’s thematic years, the state secretary said that on the basis of the previous years – which focused on Hungarian nursery schools, junior and senior elementary schools, vocational education, entrepreneurs and family businesses – it was logic that 2018 would be the year of Hungarian families abroad. Mr. Potápi added that this thematic year is connected to the “Year of Families” which was launched in Hungary in 2018. The state secretary stressed that while 20 years ago the Hungarian community in Vojvodina was in the most difficult situation in the Carpathian Basin, today it is one of the strongest communities. Mr. Potápi added that the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) and the Hungarian National Council (MNT) have had a very active role in this process.



## Hungary condemns the attack on the building of the KMKSZ in Ungvár

On Tuesday morning, unknown perpetrators set the headquarters of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) on fire in the center of Ungvár/Uzhhorod. A considerable part of the building burnt out completely. This was the second attack on the Association’s central office in a month. The previous unsuccessful arson attempt was carried out on 4 February.

After the attack, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó summoned Ukraine’s ambassador to Budapest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. Mr. Szijjártó stressed that “there is an absolutely unbelievable process under way” in Ukraine, extremist political forces are in the ascendancy. The minister added that “this is reflected in the laws passed by Ukrainian Parliament which gravely restrict the rights of minorities, while this process is likewise reflected in the fact that members of the Hungarian national community are continually intimidated in Transcarpathia.” Mr. Szijjártó highlighted this is unacceptable, and if Ukraine is serious about its aspiration to seek accession to the EU and NATO, it must be able to keep extremists under control. Speaking with the chairman of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) László Brenzovics, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán offered the government’s help to the KMKSZ. Mr. Orbán confirmed in the conversation that the organization and Hungarians living in Transcarpathia can rely on the Hungarian government. Issuing a joint statement, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, State Secretary Árpád János Potápi and



government commissioner István Grezsa condemned the attack, stating that the Government of Hungary will provide all assistance as well as the necessary funds in order to renovate the head office building and to enable the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association, the organization which represents the interests of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, to resume its activities within the shortest possible time.

### [Péter Szijjártó: A brutal attack has been launched against national minorities in Ukraine](#)

Speaking at a press conference in Budapest, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said that “the Ukrainian Government has set itself two nationalist goals: one is to prevent minorities from studying in their native language, and the other is to prevent them from speaking their own language.” At a press conference on another topic, in reply to a question from Hungarian news agency MTI the Minister was reacting to the fact that Ukraine’s Constitutional Court has ruled that legislation that enables minorities in a region to use their own language if their proportion of the region’s population exceeds 10 percent is unconstitutional. The minister said that “anyone who has so far disputed the fact that national minorities have indeed been targeted in Ukraine has now received the answer to their question.” According to Mr. Szijjártó, what is happening in Ukraine could not happen in a country that is governed by the rule of law. He added that “while Ukraine is expecting the countries of Europe to show it solidarity, it is stabbing them in the back with brutal measures aimed at national minorities.”



### [State Secretary Árpád János Potápi visits Hungarian communities in Sweden](#)

On Saturday, the National Association of Hungarians in Sweden (SMOSZ) held a general assembly at the Hungarian House in Stockholm. The event was attended by State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister’s Office Árpád János Potápi. Speaking to the Hungarian news agency MTI, the state secretary said that the SMOSZ – which was established in 1974 – is the strongest organization of Hungarian communities in Sweden which greatly contributed to the preservation of Hungarian language and culture in the country. The state secretary added that the SMOSZ receives financial assistance from the Hungarian Government every year and Hungary also helped the organization buy and renovate the building of its local youth center. Mr. Potápi added that at the general assembly of the organization held on Saturday, former president Szabolcs Bihari – who has been leading the SMOSZ for 24 years – was reelected. Mr. Potápi added that in addition to his work in Sweden, Mr. Bihari takes an active part in the work of the Hungarian Diaspora Council (MDT).