

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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New Hungarian Government holds inaugural meeting

On Friday Bertalan Havasi, the chief of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's press office, informed the Hungarian news agency MTI that the new Hungarian Government led by Viktor Orbán had held its inaugural meeting in Budapest. At the inaugural meeting, the Cabinet adopted a regulation on the tasks and spheres of competence of the government members, and adopted a memorandum on the protection of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, which will be sent to the prime ministers of NATO member states as well as the NATO Secretary-General. The chief of the press office added that in the memorandum the Hungarian Government proposes that those members of national minorities living in Ukraine which are "linked" to NATO member states should be exempted from the scope of Ukrainian laws which violate national minority rights.

Árpád János Potápi: the Kőrösi Program is the flagship of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad

The Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program – which was launched by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities abroad in 2013 with the aim of helping Hungarian communities living in different parts of the world – will continue in 2018. Before travelling to Hungarian diaspora communities, the scholarship holders will take part in a special training course in Budapest. Speaking at this event – which was attended by scholarship holders travelling to the countries of the Southern Hemisphere (Australia and New Zealand, South America and South Africa), State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the Kőrösi Program is "the flagship" of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad. Mr. Potápi stressed that in 2010 a "radical change of government" took place in Hungary, resulting in the launch of a new policy for Hungarian communities abroad. The state secretary stressed that like the Petőfi Sándor Program – which focuses on Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin – the goal of the Kőrösi Program is to help Hungarians living far from the kin-state preserve their Hungarian identity, mother tongue and culture, and "pass on this cultural treasure" to future generations. The state secretary also spoke about the results of the program so far, stressing that new Hungarian communities have been discovered, several new folk groups and scout groups have been formed, library and media life has been revived in the diaspora and many large-scale events have been organized.



János Áder visits Csángó Hungarians in Romania

On Friday, President János Áder and First Lady Anita Herczegh visited Csángó Hungarians living in Romania's Bákó/Bacau province – the first such visit by a Hungarian head of state. In the village of Lészped/Lespedi, the President met with László Pogár, the head of the Association of Moldavia's Csángó Hungarians (MCSMSZ),



who said that his community “has been waiting 400 years for Hungary’s monarch or head of state to visit”. He expressed the hope that the President’s visit would contribute to the community’s survival. In his address, Mr. Áder quoted well-known ethnographer Zoltán Kallós, who had been a teacher at Lészped, as saying that “while many peoples in the Carpathian Basin disappeared, we have stayed Hungarian [...] It is our duty to maintain our inherited traditions and pass them on to the next generation; that can only be done through faith, commitment and selflessness. We will be Hungarians for as long as we sing and dance Hungarian.”

Hundreds of thousands of Hungarians participate in the annual Csíksomlyó Pentecost Pilgrimage

Hundreds of thousands of Hungarians attended the 451st Csíksomlyó Pentecost Pilgrimage in Székelyföld/Szeklerland, which is the Hungarian nation’s largest religious event. This year’s guest of honor at the event was Marian Adam Waligóra, a Polish monk from the Pauline Monastery of Jasna Gora in Czestochowa, who spoke in Hungarian and stressed that “the protection of life comes before all else.” The Csíksomlyó Pentecost Pilgrimage was attended by Hungarian President János Áder and first lady Anita Herczegh, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad and head of the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP) Zsolt Semjén, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi and several officials from the Hungarian Government. Speaking to journalists after the event, Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén said that the Csíksomlyó Pilgrimage is “a spiritual powerhouse.” He stressed that “a lot of Hungarians, regardless of their religious affiliation, gather here year after year to strengthen themselves in their national identity and Christian mission.” Mr. Semjén added that the sermon focused on the protection of life, which is all the more important as the mass was attended by what seemed to be a record number of young people. He added that “this pilgrimage carries the message that Europe can only survive if it retains Christianity and preserves its identity, and if members of the European nation are proud of their national identity.”

New Hungarian community house is inaugurated in Gyimesbükk

On Monday a Hungarian community house – which has been renovated with financial support from the Hungarian Government – was inaugurated in Transylvania’s Gyimesbükk/Ghimeş-Făget. The building – which was built in the 1920s – was renovated with funding from the Hungarian Government of HUF 50 million (EUR 157,000). Addressing the event, State Secretary for Church, Nationality and Civil Society Relations at the Ministry of Human Capacities Miklós Soltész expressed his gratitude to Gyimes Csángós for their loyalty to their homeland, nation, Hungarian language and cultures, as well as their preservation of Hungarian traditions. He stressed that the financial support ensured by the Hungarian Government is the kin-state’s reward for this loyalty.



Péter Szijjártó: the EU integration process of the Western Balkan countries must be accelerated

Speaking at a joint press conference in Warsaw with the foreign minister of Poland, Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said that the EU integration process for Western Balkan countries must be accelerated. Speaking to the Hungarian news agency MTI, Mr. Szijjártó expressed his dissatisfaction at the fact that the European Commission has set 2025 as the target date for their accession. He called for all negotiation chapters with Serbia and Montenegro to be opened before the end of this year. He said that "There are historic tensions within the Western Balkan region, and these can be best resolved through European and Euro-Atlantic integration."



Ukrainian President withdraws citizenship bill from Parliament

Citing the need for improvement of certain clauses, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has withdrawn from the Ukrainian Parliament a draft law on amendments to the Ukrainian law on citizenship. According to the website of the Ukrainian Parliament, the bill was withdrawn on May 16, 2018. The bill would have revoked the Ukrainian citizenship of dual citizens who vote in the elections of other countries and who use foreign passports when travelling in and out of Ukraine. The proposal, which Hungary had repeatedly criticized, was originally meant to target Crimeans, but it would also have applied to citizens of every other country – including Transcarpathian Hungarians. In connection with the issue, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said that "Ukraine's withdrawal of a bill that would have stripped dual citizens of their Ukrainian citizenship must only be 'the first step' if the country is serious about its Euro-Atlantic aspirations." The Hungarian foreign minister added that the law, if passed, would have been "third blow" dealt by Ukraine to its national minorities – after the country's amendment to its education law and the declaration of its language law as unconstitutional. The Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) welcomed the decision in a statement. The KMKSZ underlined that "The bill would have had an adverse impact on the lives of millions of Ukrainian citizens who had fled a life without prospects." They added that "Ukrainian citizens with dual citizenship of EU countries are an opportunity for rapprochement towards European structures and to strengthen the country's European integration".