

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

45/2018



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Hungarian Diaspora Council and Hungarian Standing Conference to meet in mid-November

Speaking to journalists in Budapest on Tuesday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád at the Prime Minister's Office János Potápi announced that the Hungarian Diaspora Council (MDT) will meet on 15 November, while the plenary session of the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) will be held the following day in the Castle Garden Bazaar in Budapest. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán will address both gatherings which are the highest-level forums of Hungarian communities abroad. Mr. Potápi highlighted that the Hungarian Standing Conference was re-launched in 2010, while the Diaspora Council has had meetings since 2011. Regarding the agenda of the Hungarian Standing Conference, the State Secretary said that they would like to simplify the regulations concerning elections. He added that Gergely Gulyás, the Minister heading the Prime Minister's Office will deliver a speech about the details at the Hungarian Standing Conference. Mr. Potápi rendered an account of the social program package for Transcarpathian Hungarians, confirming that this year's allocation of HUF 1.37 billion (EUR 4 million) will be increased to HUF 3 billion (EUR 8 million) next year. Mr. Potápi added that the Hungarian Standing Conference will decide on the topic of the next thematic year, but they will "carry on" with the concept of supporting families. He also said that the budget of the 2019 thematic year is expected to be about HUF 1 billion (EUR 3 million). Mr. Potápi added that the closing gala of the current thematic year – the Year of Hungarian families abroad – will be held on 18 January 2019. Mr. Potápi added that additional funds may be released and allocated for Hungarian communities abroad at the end of the year. He informed the press that at present the number of new Hungarian citizens stands at 1,038,000 which may increase by a few hundred thousand more.

Árpád János Potápi: national council elections brought great results for the Hungarian community in Vojvodina

On 4 November, national council elections – the election of national minority municipalities – were held in Serbia. The following day (5 November), the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI) held a conference with the aim to summarize the results of the election. The event was attended and addressed by State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi who said that "the election brought excellent results for the Hungarian community in Vojvodina." Mr. Potápi recalled that national council elections were held for the third time in Serbia. There are 22 national councils in the country – the municipalities of national minorities – and 18 of them are elected directly. He added that the Hungarian National Council is one these councils. Mr. Potápi added that two Hungarian lists took part in the 2018 election: the list of Hungarian Unity (Magyar Összefogás lista) which



was supported by the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) and the list named Hungarian Movement – Ferenc Zsoldos (Magyar Mozgalom – Zsoldos Ferenc). According to preliminary results (after 95% of the votes were processed) the list of Hungarian Unity – lead by Jenő Hajnal – will have 30 representatives in the 35-member Hungarian National Council, while the list of the Hungarian Movement – 5 representatives. Mr. Potápi congratulated the president of the VMSZ István Pásztor and the head of the Hungarian National Council (MNT) Jenő Hajnal for the great results and stressed that it was due to their hard work. Speaking at the conference, Jenő Hajnal said that during the campaign, the representatives of the Hungarian Unity list held 338 campaign events in near 100 towns, they visited every Hungarian town and village in Vojvodina. He added that although turnout was lower than 4 years ago (it was 40,6 % in 2010 and 36% in 2018), the list of Hungarian Unity obtained more than 75% of the votes in every town.



Viktor Orbán: We need a strong European People's Party

In the Parliament Building Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Hunor Kelemen had talks about the tasks related to the congress of the European People's Party to be held in Helsinki in November. At the meeting the parties also reviewed the common Transylvanian development plans. Deputy State Secretary heading the Press Office of the Prime Minister Bertalan Havasi said that at the meeting, the President of Fidesz and the President of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) agreed that a strong European People's Party is required, and they are able to fight jointly for Hungarian interests in the most effective possible manner if after the May EP elections a strong People's Party group is formed within the European Parliament. Mr. Orbán and Mr. Kelemen pointed out that, in the present situation, they will both support Manfred Weber's nomination to the post of President of the European Commission. The parties also reviewed the common Transylvanian development projects which are taking place with the support of the Hungarian government, with special regard to educational, cultural and economic development projects.

The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomes Jean-Claude Juncker's statement concerning the centenary of Romania

The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomes Jean-Claude Juncker's speech about the Romanian centenary of December 1st, but expresses concern about the "rhetoric of Budapest." The Romanian Foreign Ministry of Affairs criticized the Kronik.ro (Romanian daily newspaper in Hungarian) article in which several Hungarian politicians condemned Juncker's words. Government spokesperson Zoltán Kovács stated that Juncker had "spoken in line with his state" and that "his lack of knowledge of historical facts confirms he is unfit for his position." Zsolt Németh, the chairman of the Hungarian National Assembly's foreign affairs committee told



Kronika.ro that “Juncker has every right to celebrate with Romania as long as he does not wish to make it compulsory for everyone.” As this was considered harsh criticism, the Romanian MFA condemned the article. Meanwhile, the MFA led by Teodor Meleșcanu expressed its support for Juncker and pointed out that the President of the European Council respects the European international system built up after the two World Wars – something he believes guarantees regional stability and security. At the same time, the MFA also expressed concern about Budapest’s rhetoric, which, in its point of view, seems to undermine efforts to maintain peace and understanding in Europe. In a statement to Hungarian news agency MTI on Tuesday, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said that over the past four and a half years, Jean-Claude Juncker has proven that he is unfit to head the European Commission. Mr. Szijjártó explained: “Juncker should have embodied the whole of Europe, but he was not capable of this with relation to either Brexit, migration, or the Romanian national holiday”.



National council elections in Serbia

The list named Hungarian Unity – lead by the head of the Hungarian National Council (MNT) Jenő Hajnal and supported by the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) – reached excellent results in the national council elections held in Serbia on 4 November 2018. According to preliminary results (after 95% of the votes were processed) the Hungarian Unity list will have 30 representatives in the 35-member Hungarian National Council, while the other Hungarian list named Hungarian Movement – Ferenc Zsoldos will have 5 representatives. Speaking at a press conference held late Sunday night, the president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that the Hungarian Unity list “has achieved great success”. The current head of the MNT Jenő Hajnal – who is likely to be elected president of the MNT for the next four years – said that these results give them an opportunity to continue their work and “do it at a higher level.” According to preliminary results, turnout was 36% at the 2018 election (lower than in 2014 and 2010).



Pavlo Klimkin: it is high time to start public debate on dual citizenship

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin has said that Ukrainians should start a public debate on the issue of dual citizenship. The foreign minister stressed that “Now we should start a public debate about the possibility of being a citizen of several countries (...). However, we cannot even talk about dual citizenship with Russia during the de facto war with this country”. He added that dual citizenship can only be applied under clear conditions. Military commanders cannot have it, and it shall not allow people hold certain posts”. The minister also recalled that dual citizenship is practiced in some European countries. He added that “people with dual citizenship



violate the law of Ukraine, although this does not mean they are criminals". Mr. Klimkin highlighted that at least 11 Hungarian citizens were killed in the Anti-Terrorist Operation zone."

