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Árpád János Potápi: the representation of Hungarian interests is stable in Slovakia

Speaking at a conference held in Budapest analyzing the results of the municipal elections held in Slovakia on 10 November, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi said that the "representation of Hungarian interests" remained stable in Slovakia, since "Hungarians managed to preserve their positions in Southern Slovakia." The conference organized by the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI) was also attended by the president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Menyhárt. Opening the event, State Secretary Potápi stressed that municipal elections are extremely important for people living in the concerned towns and villages and "party politics viewpoints" are often not crucial in these elections. Mr. Potápi congratulated every mayor and deputy who managed to win again, stressing that "they proved that they had worked well." He added that the tendency – which was observed earlier at county elections – continued: the Party of the Hungarian Community became stronger and has won more mandates. As result, it will have more mayors and deputies in Slovakia's local governments than 4 years ago. Speaking at the conference, the head of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Menyhárt said that his party managed to win seats in new towns and many of their young politicians achieved very good results. He added that the MKP is traditionally stronger in Western Slovakia and it managed to "bring these results again."



Good Hungarian-Romanian relations are in the interests of both Hungary and Transylvanian Hungarians

Speaking to the Hungarian news agency MTI after talks with Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Melescanu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said that "it is in the clear interests of both Hungary and Hungarians living in Romania for there to be good relations between the two countries, and both the Hungarian and Romanian party have done much to facilitate this recently." Mr. Szijjártó added that "thanks to the infrastructure development projects ongoing on both the Hungarian and Romanian sides of the border, from next year there will exist the physical possibility of transporting 1.75 billion cubic meters of natural gas towards Hungary each year, increasing to 4.4 billion cubic meters from 2022". The Minister and Mr. Melescanu agreed to permanently open the border crossing stations at Dombegyház and Elek, which are currently only open one day-a-week, in the interests of making life easier for the local communities, in addition to which the Hungarian M4 and Romanian A3 motorways will be connected by the end of 2022, after which Nagyvárad/Oradea will also be accessible from Hungary by motorway. Mr. Szijjártó



told the press that preparations for the construction of the high-speed railway line connecting Budapest and Bucharest via Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca are also moving ahead well, and the Hungarian party has set aside one billion forints for the preparation of the feasibility study. In reply to a question on whether the parties had discussed the Romanian centenary, the one-hundredth anniversary of the session of the Romanian National Assembly in Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia in 1918, which declared the merging of Transylvania and the Kingdom of Romania, Mr. Szijjártó said: the subject always crops up, and on his part he drew the attention of the Romania Foreign Minister to the importance of mutual respect, on which the Hungarian Government otherwise usually bases its foreign policy.

After talks with the head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca, Mr. Szijjártó announced that the Hungarian Government will continue its economic development program in Romania: after the Mezőség region, the program will be expanded to Szeklerland. He added that in the first (pilot) phase of the program, HUF 1.5 billion (EUR 4.6 million) was distributed among Hungarian entrepreneurs in Transylvania. Mr. Szijjártó added that in 2019, the Hungarian Government will continue the Carpathian Basin economic development program with a budget of HUF 50 billion (EUR 155 million).



Independent candidates won the most seats in Slovakia's local elections

On 10 November, municipal elections were held in Slovakia which brought the winning of independent candidates and the weakening of the largest government party, the Smer. Both the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) and the mixed Most-Híd ("Bridge") party achieved better results than four years ago. Turnout at the election – at national level – was 48.67% (0.3 % higher than in 2014). In 42% of the 3000 Slovakian towns, independent candidates won the majority of the seats. The candidates of the Party of the Hungarian Community reached good results in Southern regions. As a result, the MKP will have more mayors and deputies than four years ago (it has had 107 mayors so far and due to the current results it will have 115 mayors in the next four years). The Most-Híd ("Bridge") party also strengthened: it increased the number of its mayors from 87 to 127. In addition, the two parties will have 31 mayors in coalition.

Péter Szilágyi: the task of the Carpathian Basin education space is to unite Hungarian youth abroad

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony of a new Hungarian school center in Szepsi/ Moldava nad Bodvou in Slovakia, Ministerial Commissioner responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad Péter Szilágyi stressed that since 2010, the Hungarian Government has made serious efforts in order to create a Carpathian Basin education space the task of which is to unite Hungarian youth abroad. Mr. Szilágyi expressed his pleasure that they managed to lay the basis of a new Hungarian school



which “will be a new, community-preserving Hungarian island”. The ministerial commissioner spoke about the main results of the past eight years in the field of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad, mentioning the rebuilding and strengthening of Hungarian institutional system in the Carpathian Basin as well as the financial supporting of church, cultural and education institutions. He added that as part of the HUF 38.5 billion (EUR 120 million) Carpathian Basin Nursery School Program, more than 150 new day care centers and kindergartens will be built in the Carpathian Basin and more than 400 institutions will be renewed. Mr. Szilágyi stressed that all these programs ensure a “stable basis” for Hungarian-language education in the Carpathian Basin.



The composition of the Hungarian National Council in Vojvodina will not change significantly

According to the final results of the national council elections held in Serbia on 4 November, no significant changes will take place in the composition of the Hungarian National Council. 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) – 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. The Hungarian National Council is the local self-government body of the Hungarian minority living in Serbia. Hungarians living in Serbia can realize and practice their right to cultural autonomy through this body. The MNT’s sphere of action includes culture, information, language use and education. Eight years ago, turnout among Hungarians at national council elections was 55.46, while in 2014 – 40.6%. In 2018 the rate was lower: only 36.55% of Hungarians took part in the election.



Ukraine agrees to accept István Íjgyártó as new Hungarian Ambassador

Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry issued an agreement for appointing István Íjgyártó new Ambassador of Hungary in Kiev. The new ambassador is expected to come to Ukraine on November 8. On Monday, former ambassador Ernő Keskeny whose diplomatic tenure is over in Ukraine, left the country. The new Ambassador of Hungary in Ukraine István Íjgyártó was born on the territory of modern Ukraine, in Transcarpathia. As has been reported, Hungary has changed the title of “the minister for Transcarpathia” (which was disapproved by Ukraine). The decision was published by the Hungarian Justice Ministry on October 29. After this step, Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry issued an agreement for appointing István Íjgyártó new Ambassador of Hungary in Kiev





House Speaker Unveils 1956 Memorial in Lima

On Saturday, the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly László Kövér i inaugurated a memorial plaque dedicated to “the innocent victims of Hungary’s 1956 revolution and freedom fight” in Lima . Addressing the ceremony, Mr. Kövér said the plaque also paid tribute to the Peruvian people’s solidarity with the Hungarian people “who started an armed revolt for their freedom against the world’s most terrible power, the godless and inhuman communist Soviet Union.” The house speaker stressed that the two nations are connected by a multitude of strong ties, including their common western Christian culture. Mr. Kövér presented a Gold Cross of Merit to Catholic priest Tibor Szeles. The high honor was granted him by Hungarian President János Áder in recognition of his efforts to help members of Peru’s Hungarian community keep their national identity.

