

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE  
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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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## Hungary to be among the EU's best five countries by 2030

On Thursday in Budapest, at the 8th plenary meeting of the Hungarian Diaspora Council, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán outlined the aim for Hungary to be among the European Union's five best countries in which to live and work by 2030. Identifying another goal to be attained by 2030, the Prime Minister said that Hungary should be among the EU's five most competitive countries. He also spoke of other goals to be achieved by 2030: halting – and then reversing – the country's demographic decline; rebuilding the Carpathian Basin through the construction of rapid road and rail links; the building of Central Europe as a single political and economic region; and attainment of energy independence for Hungary. Regarding the latter, he said that there must be a phased abandonment of one-sided dependence on Russian energy, Hungary must have internal energy sources and access to energy from multiple sources outside the country. He stressed the importance of the launch of new demographic measures and programs, saying that the aim is to pursue these objectives in every possible department, and to make them a criterion in providing state funding. The Prime Minister said that over the past year the most important development has been that the parliamentary election in April guaranteed continuation of Hungary's internal political stability for the next four years. In his opinion, without a stable government Hungary would have neither a stable economy nor a stable culture. At the end of his speech he told Hungarian diaspora communities that the funds allocated for programs aimed at them will continue to be available in the coming years.

## Central European region's strength to gain in importance

At the 17th meeting of the Hungarian Standing Conference, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that over the next few years Central Europe and the entire Carpathian Basin will be the engine of European economic growth. Mr. Orbán drew attention to the fact that the volume and value of German-French trade is only 50 per cent of that between the V4 and Germany, "which is unprecedented". Therefore, in the Prime Minister's view, in terms of volume of trade the Central Europe-Germany axis is more significant than the German-French economic axis. Concerning Slavonia, the Prime Minister said that he will travel to Croatia for an official Croatian-Hungarian intergovernmental meeting at the beginning of December. He expressed the hope that it will be possible to continue the extensive cross-border economic development program in Slavonia in Croatia and in South Baranya in Hungary. Speaking about Western Europe, he said that "West of Vienna the situation is hopeless demographically", as the consequences of the acceptance of multiculturalism have induced almost irreversible sociological processes in major cities west of Vienna. In connection with the one hundredth anniversary of the end of World War I, Mr. Orbán also observed that World War I commemorations are being extended by two years, up until the anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon. With reference to next year's European Parliament (EP) elections, he spoke about changes giving voting rights to



citizens with no residence in the EU. He highlighted that the EP elections are not party elections, but pan-Hungarian elections. A certain number of representatives are (EPP) in the European People's Party, and there are Hungarian organizations beyond the borders which also form part of the EPP. The Prime Minister said that votes of their representatives can be combined with the votes of Hungarian MEPs in order to assert joint interests. In Serbia they have been building an "unprecedented story" for many years, and they are seeking to elevate Serbian-Hungarian relations to a strategic level. Regarding Felvidék (Southern Slovakia), the existence of the mixed party of Felvidék raises the issue of whether there should be ethnically organized parties in the region, or it is more expedient to form mixed parties. He said that it is dangerous to change over to mixed political representation: it is a trap which should be avoided. Analyzing the economic development programs conducted beyond the borders, in the context of Transylvania he highlighted that there is no point in launching economic development programs only for the state exercising supreme power in the country to later retaliate against businesses receiving grants. He therefore asked the parties representing Hungarians in the given areas – and he will continue this line also in the future – to conduct negotiations with the majority state in order to reach the agreement that is essential for the continuation of Hungarian economic development programs. Regarding Ukraine He said that it is a difficult story, and while he does not like to use demeaning adjectives in connection with the elected leaders of other states, the truth is that "we are not making progress with the Ukrainians".

### Zsolt Semjén: thanks should go to diaspora Hungarians who stand up for Hungarians in Ukraine

Speaking at the 8th plenary session of the Hungarian Diaspora Council, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén stressed that it means a lot that Hungarians living in the diaspora stand for Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin, among them, Hungarians in Transcarpathia. He stressed that Hungarians in Ukraine are currently in the most difficult situation among Hungarian communities in neighboring countries and expressed his gratitude to diaspora Hungarians for their stance. Speaking about the main results of the plenary session, Mr. Semjén said that the members of the Diaspora Council welcomed that the rules of Hungarian parliamentary election (registration and voting) will be simplified in the future. He added that due to the planned changes Hungarian citizens living abroad – including Hungarians in Serbia, Transcarpathia and the diaspora – will also be able to vote in EP elections. Speaking at a press conference held after the first part of the plenary session, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi recalled that between 2010 and 2014, the Hungarian Government established the new framework of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad due to which the Hungarian nation today is more integrated and stronger. He stressed that the current Hungarian Government considers Hungarians living abroad an integral and inseparable part of the nation. Mr. Potápi added that in the light of this, the Act on



Hungarian Citizenship was modified in 2010 and the simplified naturalization procedure was introduced. Concerning the closing declaration of the session, the state secretary said that the members of the council expressed their solidarity with the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. He also said that from 2019, the Award for Hungarian Communities Abroad will receive the name Kallós Zoltán Award for Hungarian Communities Abroad. Mr. Potápi said that memorial years will also continue: 2019 will be the memorial year of Ferenc Rákóczi II.

### The closing declaration of the MÁÉRT approved by full consensus

Speaking at a press conference held after the 17th plenary session of the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT), Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén announced that the closing declaration was approved by full consensus. The Deputy Prime Minister said that in Hungarian politics there is unusual consensus among Hungarian political parties – except for the Democratic Coalition (DK) – and Hungarian organizations abroad that Hungarian communities abroad are entitled to Hungarian citizenship, voting right and autonomy. Mr. Semjén stressed that financial resources ensured for Hungarians abroad has grown ten-fold throughout the past 10 years and economic development programs in neighboring countries has become a huge success. He added that so far HUF 50 billion (EUR 154 million) has been spent on the economic strengthening of Hungarian communities abroad as a result of which more than 33,000 Hungarian enterprises abroad received financial support from Hungary. Mr. Semjén stressed that these programs are extremely useful not only for Hungarians but also for Hungary since they expand the Hungarian GDP as well. The Deputy Prime Minister also spoke about the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Development Program, highlighting that if children abroad attend Hungarian-language kindergartens, they are likely to continue their studies in Hungarian schools. He also spoke about the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program and the Petőfi Sándor Program within the framework of which more and more scholarship holders are sent to different parts of the world to help Hungarian communities strengthen their Hungarian roots. Speaking at the press conference, State Secretary Árpád János Potápi announced that in accordance with the decision of the MÁÉRT, 2019 will be the year of Hungarian children abroad. He added that similarly to the previous year, the Hungarian Government will spend HUF 1 billion (EUR 3 million) on the program.



### Szekler Assembly Held in Support of Territorial Autonomy

In remembrance of their one hundred year struggle for equal rights, the Szekler National Council (SZNT) has organized an assembly for Szeklers in Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe Romania. The aim of the assembly was to demand territorial autonomy for Szekler counties. The speakers reminded Bucharest of the unfulfilled promises of the Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia Romanian National Assembly in 1918. The chairman of the Szekler National Council, Balázs Izsák, convened the



demonstration and urged Bucharest to discuss Szekler's autonomy. In his opinion, a Romanian decision to help further Hungarian ambitions would show great respect for the heritage of Gyulafehérvár and the institution of the presidency. László Tőkés, Member of the European Parliament and President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, said that the era of the 20th century, in which the victorious powers of the "Great War" ignored the Hungarian minorities right to self-determination is over. He declared that "autonomy is the only correct answer to Gyulafehérvár and Trianon" today.



### József Menyhárt: the MKP had fewer candidates but better results at the municipal elections

Speaking at a press conference in Pozsony/Bratislava evaluating the results of the municipal elections which were held in Slovakia on 10 November, the president of the Party of the , but even despite this it achieved better results. Mr. Menyhárt said that this result is a definite success. The head of the MKP added that his party managed to increase the number of both its mayors (from 107 to 116) and its representatives in local governments. He stressed that in addition to their own candidates for mayoral positions, there were 53 towns where candidates ran in coalition and there were 37 towns won by independent candidates supported by the MKP. Mr. Menyhárt stressed that "altogether, the MKP will have 205 mayors, and this is the same result as four years ago." He added that this means that in 2018 the MKP managed to achieve better results with fewer candidates.



### The Hungarian Ambassador was not summoned to the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry

"The Hungarian Ambassador held talks at Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the initiative of Hungary; he was not summoned", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Minister of State for Communication said in a statement to Hungarian news agency MTI on Saturday. "The talks between the Hungarian Ambassador and the regionally responsible head of department at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry yesterday occurred at the initiative of Ambassador István Íjgyártó, and were aimed at improving bilateral relations", Tamás Menczer wrote. "This means that in contrast to previous reports there was no question of the Ambassador being summoned; the meeting took place at Hungary's initiative. Ukraine asked about the statements made at a recent meeting of the Hungarian Diaspora Council, in reply to which the Hungarian Ambassador said that on several occasions Ukraine has recently also taken action leading to a worsening of the situation of Transcarpathian Hungarians and the further restriction of their rights" he added.