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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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2015 will be the year of Hungarian vocational schools abroad

On Thursday State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi announced in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca that the Hungarian government would declare 2015 the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad. At a conference entitled “The opportunities of dual vocational education in the Transylvanian diaspora” held at the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, the state secretary said that the final decision on vocational education abroad would be made by the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) at its session scheduled for the second half of November. Mr. Potápi said it was important that after symbolic questions Hungary’s policy for Hungarian communities abroad is focusing on the economy. He added that the best way of ensuring Hungarians’ prosperity in their homeland is to give them an opportunity to learn a profession by means of which they can earn a living for their children and families. The state secretary underlined that “For Hungary, the most important aim is that Hungarians remain in their homeland.” Mr. Potápi added that “The framework is given, but we should fill it with content, using the tools of economic policy.”

Ponta and Johannis go forward to the second round of the presidential election in Romania

According to preliminary results published on Monday, Prime Minister Victor Ponta of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Klaus Johannis, mayor of Nagyszeben/Sibiu have gone through to the second round of Romania’s presidential election, scheduled for 16 November. In the first round of the election Mr. Ponta had a 10 percent advantage over Mr. Johannis, the candidate of the opposition Christian Liberal Alliance (ACL). After 91.33% of the votes had been counted, Victor Ponta had won 40.01 % of the vote, while Mr. Johannis had received 30.54 %. The head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen won 3.66 % (i.e. 320,446 votes), while the candidate of the Hungarian People’s Party of Transylvania (EMNP) Zolt Szilágyi received 0.58 % (i.e. 51,358 votes).



Robert Kaliňák postpones the submission of the amendment to the Slovak Citizenship Act

Slovakia’s Minister of the Interior Robert Kaliňák has announced that his ministry is still awaiting submission of the amendment to the Act on Citizenship, therefore the document will not be put before Parliament this year. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has passed opinion on the amendment from the point of view of Slovakia’s international legal obligations. The new law makes the acquisition of citizenship conditional upon the possession of a permanent residence abroad; therefore those who have lost their citizenship due to the law in its current form would be able to recover it upon request.



The current form of Slovakia's Act on Citizenship was adopted in 2010 as a reaction to Hungary's simplified naturalization procedure, which made possible the acquisition of Hungarian citizenship for Hungarians without a permanent residence in Hungary. According to the Act, persons adopting the citizenship of another country are deprived of their Slovak citizenship and passport. As a result of the amendment, almost 900 people have lost their Slovak citizenship so far.

Regulation adopted abolishing the collective guilt of three Hungarian towns in Vojvodina

At a commemoration ceremony held on Sunday in Szabadka/Subotica in honor of the innocent victims executed in 1944-45, Prime Minister of Serbia Aleksander Vučić announced that, after 70 years, a regulation has been adopted in Serbia abolishing the collective guilt of the Hungarian residents of Csúrog/ Čurug, Zsablya/Žabalj and Mozsor/Mosorin. Speaking at the event – held at Plot 44 of the Zenta út cemetery, and opening with an ecumenical service at the recently renovated statue “Struggling Bird” (Vergődő Madár) – master of ceremonies Imre Némedi said that “70 years ago depravity and inhumanity claimed the lives of several hundred innocent victims.”

On Sunday Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary Zsolt Semjén told the Hungarian news agency MTI that the Hungarian Government was relieved to learn that after 70 years a regulation has been adopted in Serbia abolishing the collective guilt of the Hungarian residents of Csúrog/Čurug, Zsablya/Žabalj and Mozsor/Mosorin. The Deputy Prime Minister wrote that the Hungarian government welcomes the Serbian prime minister's announcement and the tribute paid to the innocent victims executed in 1944-1945; this is considered a symbolic step in the process of Serbian-Hungarian reconciliation. Mr. Semjén underlined that this move in Serbia's policy has met a long-standing aspiration of Hungary.

Potápi: The Hungarian National Council has fulfilled its mission

State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi has said that the Hungarian National Council (MNT) in Vojvodina has fulfilled the historic mission it had been established for. At a conference organized by the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad in the House of Hungarians (Magyarság Háza) in Budapest, the state secretary evaluated the results of national minority council elections in Vojvodina held on 26 October; in these the list entitled “Hungarian Unity” (Magyar Összefogás) – based on the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) – won a landslide victory, winning 90 percent of Hungarians' votes. The Hungarian Unity list won 31 out of the 35 mandates, the list of the Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMDK) – Áron Csonka list won two mandates, and the “Másként Magyarságunkért” – László Fodor list won one mandate, as did the Hungarian League – New Hungarian Alternative – Tibor Vass list. Mr. Potápi expressed the hope that the MNT's historic mission would also remain in the next term, adding that the Hungarian



government would give all necessary assistance to the MNT for it to realize its aims. The head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that Vojvodina Hungarians would like to make use of the opportunities ensured by the MNT. Mr. Pásztor added that it is worth struggling for the Hungarian community's self-determination through the national council and within the framework of autonomy. Jenő Hajnal who participated at the head of the Hungarian Unity list, said that they would like to provide new opportunities and perspectives for the Hungarian community in Vojvodina, adding that during the previous weeks they had managed to develop a very effective dialog with the community.



László Brenzovics wins mandate in the Ukrainian Parliament

Speaking to the Hungarian news agency MTI on Friday, the head of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) László Brenzovics said that as a member of the new Ukrainian parliament he would work on realizing the strategic aims of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. At the early parliamentary elections in Ukraine held on 26 October, László Brenzovics won a seat in the Parliament, participating in 62nd place on the list of Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko (Petro Poroshenko's Bloc). Mr. Brenzovics said that he sees it as extremely important that the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia has a representative in the Ukrainian Parliament again. He emphasized that he will work on realizing the aims laid down in the agreement concluded between the KMKSZ and Petro Poroshenko in May: the assertion of Hungarians' rights concerning language use (in line with European norms), the formation of conditions necessary for the development of the Hungarian educational system, support of the interests of Hungarians living in a bloc during Ukrainian territorial-administrative reform, and the realization of Hungarian representation in the Ukrainian parliament.

The Hungarian government issued a statement welcoming the fact that the new Ukrainian parliament has a Hungarian representative. In the statement, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi emphasized that the strengthening of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations continues to be extremely important for the Hungarian government, and Mr. Brenzovics's mandate could contribute to this. The state secretary added that Hungary supports Ukraine's approach to the EU and hopes that the decisions of the new Ukrainian government and parliament will contribute to the strengthening of democratic processes in the country which could also ensure the assertion of the Hungarian community's rights in line with European norms.

New president of Transcarpathia's County Council has been elected

At the second plenary meeting of the 19th session of the Transcarpathian County Council (KMT) which was held on 31 October in Uzhhorod, the President of the Council Ivan Baloga and the body's vice president László Brenzovics resigned from their posts. It was



the first time that a Member of the European Parliament – in the person of Andrea Bocskor – also addressed the meeting. Ms. Bocskor said that she had supported the association agreement between Ukraine and the EU, and emphasized that the continuation of the country's EU integration represents the only way forward for Ukraine. At the secret ballot, member of the United Center Volodymyr Chubirko was appointed the new president of the Council.