

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

18/2015



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad receives Hungarian students from neighboring countries

On Monday, as part of the program “2015 – the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad”, the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad received 150 Hungarian students taking part in Hungarian-language vocational training in neighboring countries. The students arrived from Hungarian-language vocational institutions in neighboring countries and were received by the state secretariat at the Profession Star Festival, which was organized for the eighth time this year by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The guests watched the competitions, received information about the opportunities in different professions and made contact with the representatives of Hungary’s vocational institutions. The aim of the state secretariat’s program is to develop Hungarian-language vocational training abroad by increasing the number of young Hungarians who are qualified, well-prepared and innovative, meeting the requirements of today’s labor market.



Hunor Kelemen writes to the president of the Venice Commission

The president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen has written to the President of the Venice Commission Gianni Buquicchio, outlining to him anomalies in field of national minorities’ rights in Romania. On 30 April Romania’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Babeş-Bolyai University organized a conference in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca, on the 20th anniversary of Romania’s ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe. In his letter Mr. Kelemen wrote that the Hungarian community in Romania is the largest national minority not only in Romania but also in the European Union, yet despite this fact the representatives of this community had not been invited to the conference. Mr. Kelemen added that “this attitude is insulting and anti-democratic, and raises serious questions about the commitment of Romania’s government to dialogue and cooperation with national minorities.”

Romania’s Court of Justice orders the arrest of Attila Markó

On Wednesday the Court of Justice of Romania ordered the arrest of a former MP of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Attila Markó. Mr. Markó – who is currently residing in Hungary – together with seven other members of the Romanian restitution committee, was suspected of misuse of power on 9 March by the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) of Romania. According to the indictment, the accused members of the committee caused damages of EUR 85 million to the state when they decided upon the restitution of properties nationalized during the communist era, valuing them above the market value.

In April Mr. Markó resigned his mandate as MP in the Romanian parliament and told Kossuth Radio that he was planning to start a new life in Budapest, hoping that



Hungary would not cooperate in his extradition. He added that he does not trust the Romanian justice system, after he was sentenced to a three-year suspended sentence for taking part in the restitution of the Székely Mikó High School, which was then renationalized.

Tamás Wetzel: “Friendly pictures make no sense if relations are not sincere”

Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister’s Office Tamás Wetzel has said that only open and sincere Hungarian-Romanian dialogue makes sense. The state secretary attended a press conference at Hungary’s Consulate General in Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc on Tuesday, and responded to questions from the Hungarian news agency MTI in connection with Hungary’s kin-state policy. Answering a question connected with Romanian-Hungarian relations which have been “stagnating for years”, Mr. Wetzel said that open and sincere dialogue is in Hungary’s interest. He mentioned the renationalization of the Székely Mikó High School, Romanian authorities’ actions against the singing of the Hungarian National Anthem, the use of the Szekler flag and bilingual street signs, as well as the case of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Targu Mureş/Marosvásárhely as the most urgent problems to be settled. The state secretary added that “it makes no sense to take friendly photographs at a joint government meeting if it brings no practical result for the Hungarian community in Transylvania.”



The Carpathian Basin Tour of the Year of Hungarian vocational education abroad program has begun

In December 2014 the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad of the Prime Minister’s Office launched the program “2015 – the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad”, with the aim of developing Hungarian-language vocational training in neighboring countries. As part of the program, the state secretariat is organizing a tour in the Carpathian Basin, providing the students taking part in the program with an opportunity to participate in different inspirational training events. The tour was opened on 30 April by State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi in Slovakia’s Karva/Kravany nad Dunajom. At the opening ceremony, the state secretary stressed that the most effective way to help Hungarian communities prosper in their homeland is to ensure an opportunity for them to learn a profession by which they can make a living for their families. Mr. Potápi emphasized that attention must be drawn to the importance of Hungarian-language vocational education. He added that “in towns where such institutions do not exist, they must be established, while in places where they do, they must be developed.” The training events on the tour will focus on discovering talents, fostering innovative thinking, group work skills and entrepreneurship.



The Council of National Minorities is established

On Wednesday the Council of National Minorities of Serbia held its inaugural meeting in Belgrade. In addition to the presidents of national councils, the meeting was attended by the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Minister of Education and Science, Minister of Culture and Information, and several state secretaries from ministries dealing with the issues of national communities. The meeting was convened by the Prime Minister of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić, while the meeting was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government Kori Udovički. The meeting was also attended by the President of the Hungarian National Council Jenő Hajnal, who emphasized the importance of direct relations between the ministries and national councils.



Support for Hungarians in Transcarpathia

In Kisvárdá Minister for Human Capacities Zoltán Balog signed an agreement with the representatives of Transcarpathian Hungarians' organizations and churches on the support of Hungarians living in Transcarpathia. After signing the agreement, the Minister announced that the Hungarian government would support camps in summer and fall-winter for at least three thousand Hungarian children living in Transcarpathia. Mr. Balog added that the coordinator of the summer camp program would be State Secretary for Family and Youth Affairs Katalin Novák, while the Hungarian National Foundation for Recreation (HNFR) would be responsible for the program's implementation.



An economic base is necessary for the preservation of Hungarian identity

In a presentation given at Hungary's Embassy in Vienna on Wednesday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that in order to strengthen the identity of Hungarians living abroad, we must also support them economically in their homeland. The state secretary added that economic development can be achieved by a properly qualified labor force, therefore education in Hungarian-language institutions must be strengthened. Mr. Potápi added that thinking within the EU does not differentiate between traditional national minorities and immigrants of non-European descent who have moved to the EU recently. He said that the primary purpose of Hungary's kin state-policy is to make a distinction between these two concepts.



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