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Árpád János Potápi: We are all responsible for the future of the nation

Speaking at an event entitled “The Christmas of Hungarians” organized by the Ópusztaszer National Heritage Park, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that “We were and are all responsible for the future of the nation.” The state secretary said that “It depends on us whether there will be a Hungarian Christmas in dispersed Hungarian communities and the diaspora in the future.” This is the eighth year in which The Christmas of Hungarians has been organized. This years’ “guests of honor” were the primary school students of two Hungarian towns in Slovenia, Lendva/Lendava and Dobronak/Dobrovnik, who presented a show for the occasion. Mr. Potápi stressed that “For a long period, we Hungarians have not been given a chance to celebrate Christmas together, hand in hand. However, Hungarians living in the kin-state and those who were divided from it and forced to live in a new world were always standing together around the joint Christmas tree, the symbol of cohesion.” He added that “For as long as the strength of our cohesion does not weaken, for as long as Christmas carols and the gospel in churches are sung in Hungarian both in the kin-state and abroad, for as long as there are Hungarian communities who celebrate Christmas together, the tree of the Hungarian community will remain, since there will always be people who will decorate it in good times and look after it during times of hardship.”

Four people are presented with the Magyar Nyelvőr Award

The Magyar Nyelvőr Foundation (“Hungarian Language Guardian Foundation”) has presented the Magyar Nyelvőr Awards (“Hungarian Language Guardian Awards”) for the second time. The awards were presented in Parliament on Friday by the patron of the event, State Secretary for Government Communication Bence Tuzson. Speaking at the event, the state secretary stressed that it is the Hungarian language that unites Hungarians, therefore it is especially important to pay attention to those who for decades have been working for the preservation of the beauty of the Hungarian language, and to recognize their efforts and service. The award was given to four people who have done much for the cultivation of the Hungarian language in Hungary and abroad: Borbála Keszler, István Cserniczkó, Sándor Balogh and Péter Siptár.

Hunor Kelemen: 2015 has been a year of retreat in the field of minority rights

On Thursday, speaking at an annual review press conference in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca, the president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that “2015 has been a year of retreat in the assertion of minority rights.” Mr. Kelemen said that state institutions tried to suppress the rights of minorities, and therefore the RMDSZ will initiate the adoption of a pact with political actors which would guarantee existing minority rights and declare that minority issues should be discussed in a “parliamentary environment”. The head of the RMDSZ



listed the rights abuses minorities in Romania suffered during the year: punishments for singing the Hungarian National Anthem and for the use of community symbols and inscriptions; and the Romanian Ministry of Interior's draft strategy issued in March 2015 which states that Hungarians' demands for ethnic autonomy are a threat to public safety. Mr. Kelemen added that it is unacceptable that Romanian authorities consider demands for autonomy to be a national security risk. The President of the RMDSZ also spoke about the aims of the alliance for the 2016 election year. With regard to local elections, Mr. Kelemen said that the party would like to retain the 203 mayors' positions it holds, and win further ones.

Members of the MPP are standing in the elections on the RMDSZ list

The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) has extended the cooperation agreement it concluded last year with the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP), with a pact on 2016 elections. The political cooperation agreement was signed by the presidents of the two parties in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca on Friday, at an event not open to the press. The president of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen said that "this document proves that thinking together, joint planning and joint actions have been successful so far." He added that the parties' aim is to conclude an agreement for the two elections in 2016 which focuses on a single aspect: the fulfillment of Hungarian interests in the widest possible sphere. Mr. Kelemen added that the agreement includes every town in Transylvania in which the unity of the two organizations is necessary, therefore in towns where joint actions are necessary to preserve, strengthen or regain Hungarian representation.



The Vatican closes the Benedictine monastery in Komárom

The Vatican has closed the Benedictine monastery in Slovakia's Komárom/Komárno. The Holy See made this decision on 13 November 2015. All property of the monastery – including immovable and movable assets – has been transferred to the Archdiocese of Nagyszombat/Trnava. According to the decision-makers, the monastery had not contributed to the strengthening of the Benedictine order in Slovakia and had not supported the spiritual life of local people of faith, but had become a source of discord in the local community. The Archabbot of Pannonhalma Asztrik Várszegi has written to the Vatican, asking it to reverse the decision on closure of the monastery in Komárom. Archabbot Várszegi recalled that in 2014 the Archbishop of Nagyszombat János Orosch had 660 hectares of arable land (owned by the monastery of Komárom) registered in the name of the Nagyszombat Archdiocese, without informing the representatives of the Benedictine Order. After this, the Archbishop of Nagyszombat terminated the church legal status of the monastery in Komárom, blocked its bank account and ordered the handover of the building.



The regional and economic development strategy receives great interest

The regional and economic development strategy of Vojvodina's Hungarian communities was introduced in Szabadka/Subotica on Thursday, amid great interest. Speaking at the event, the President of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that from the financial support of HUF 50 billion (EUR 158 million) provided by Hungary, HUF 20 billion (EUR 63 million) will be distributed during the next three years as non-refundable aid; the rest of the support – HUF 30 billion (EUR 94 million) – will be in the form of a preferential bank loan. In the first round of the tender – which will take place at the end of January – micro and small entrepreneurs in Vojvodina can apply in 10 different topics. These topics include tenders supporting job creation, standardization and tourist enterprises. The tenders will also focus on the settling of young people, since in January they can also have access to funds for housing and house purchases.

Two new workshops are opened at the agricultural school in Topolya

Two new workshops have been inaugurated at the agricultural school in Topolya/Bačka Topola. The establishment of the workshops was supported by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad of the Prime Minister's Office of Hungary under the program "2015 – the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad". The program was created to help the permanence of Hungarian communities abroad (including Vojvodina Hungarians) in their homeland. Under the program, the agricultural school in Topolya has received two new workshops. The workshops in Topolya include a veterinary medicine workshop and a plant and an agricultural machinery workshop, as well as a bakery.



First lady Anita Herczegh makes a goodwill visit to Transcarpathia

President János Áder's wife Anita Herczegh has made a one-day goodwill visit to Transcarpathia. During her stay, the First Lady handed over a donation of nineteen tons of flour to nine educational and children's institutions maintained by the Transcarpathian church, as well as a charity organization belonging to the Irgalmas Szamaritánus Reformed Children's Home in Nagydobrony (Ungvár/Uzhhorod district). After the donation ceremony, Ms. Herczegh visited the children's home, which operates without state support, but provides a home to 68 children, including orphans, underprivileged and disabled children. The First Lady also visited the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute and laid a wreath at a plaque honoring Hungary's former head of state Ferenc Mádl.