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Mihály Varga: there is unity among Hungarians wherever they live

Speaking at the award ceremony of the Friends of Hungary Foundation (Magyarország Barátai Alapítvány) held at the Pesti Vigadó, Minister for National Economy Mihály Varga said that “we are a lucky nation, since wherever Hungarians live in this world, they stick together and many of them reward us with their friendship.” Praising the work of the Friends of Hungary Foundation, the minister said that the supporters of the foundation are making serious efforts to make the world familiar with Hungary’s achievements, the motives of the Hungarian Government’s decisions and Hungary’s main goals.

The Friends of Hungary Foundation held its 4th world congress in Budapest on 5-7 May. At a ceremony held on Saturday at the Pesti Vigadó, the “Friend of Hungary Awards” were presented. The first recipient of the award was Reinhard Olt, a German journalist. He was followed by Béla Lipták, the leader of the Magyar Lobbi (Hungarian Lobby). The final recipient of the Friend of Hungary Award was the American Hungarian Federation (AHF).

On Friday, the members of the Friends of Hungary Foundation were hosted at the Sándor Palace by President of Hungary János Áder and First Lady Anita Herczegh. In his welcome speech, János Áder thanked the guests for their loyal friendship, and for raising interest in Hungary while boosting its reputation. He stressed that “A country is more than just an area that can be identified on a map: it has a spiritual aura that can impact our economic, cultural and political lives.”

More and more students are taking part in the Without Borders program

Parliamentary State Secretary at the Ministry of Human Capacities Bence Rétvári announced that during one year, the number of applicants in the Without Borders (Határtalanul) program has grown by 25 percent. In the framework of the program, students studying in Hungary’s schools visit Hungarian-populated areas in neighboring countries. The state secretary recalled that over the recent period, several changes have taken place in the program: the amount of support per student has increased, and – in contrast to the previous years – the support can be spent on not only accommodation and travelling costs, but dining and different programs as well. Mr. Rétvári said that in 2016, the total number of students participating in the program was 28,582, while in 2017 this number has reached 35,812 and the application period is not over. He added that in the following rounds of the program, the number of participants might further increase.



The Ferenc Kölcsey High School of Szatmárnémeti receives further support from Hungary

Speaking at the opening ceremony of a history competition for students (which is part of the Saint Ladislaus Memorial Year launched by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad), Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities



Abroad Péter Szilágyi announced that Hungary will offer nearly HUF 500 million (EUR 1.6 million) for the Ferenc Kölcsey High School of Szatmárnémeti/Satu Mare. Mr. Szilágyi recalled that last year Hungary allocated HUF 250 million (EUR 800,000) for the renovation of the school, and this year HUF 455 million (EUR 1.45 million) will be added to this sum. The deputy state secretary stressed that “since 2010, Hungary has paid particular attention to Hungarian communities living outside the kin-state.” He added that “the financial support Hungary is allocating for the Ferenc Kölcsey High School – a symbolic educational institution of the region – proves that this attention is more than empty words.” Mr. Szilágyi added that this success is the result of excellent cooperation between Hungary and local representatives: the head of the county council and the mayor of the town.

Meleşcanu: the enforcement of national minority right is of utmost importance

On Thursday, speaking at a conference on good governance in Bucharest, Romania’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Meleşcanu stressed that “guaranteeing the rights of national minorities is necessary to ensure stability, security and good neighborhood in the region.” The foreign minister added that “Romania was probably one of the European countries with the most developed regulations on protecting national minority rights.” He added that “the enforcement of minority rights is a test of maturity in Europe where intolerance has prevailed and that has found itself repeatedly torn apart by conflicts between majorities and minorities, be them ethnic, religious or of any other nature.”

Last week the Romanian media portrayed Hungary’s Trianon 100 research group – which was awarded HUF 30 million (EUR 96,000) within the framework of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences’ “Impetus” program for young researchers for a five-year project on increasing, summarizing and publishing knowledge about the Treaty of Trianon – as a promoter of “anti-Romanian” propaganda. In a lecture, the Rector of the Babes-Bolyai University of Science in Cluj/Kolozsvár claimed that Romania “is involved in an information and communication war with Hungary”, and that Budapest has “set up a state department paid for out of its own budget called Trianon 100”, while the Romania Centenary department set up by the administration in Bucharest has no separate budget. Hungary’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade strongly rejected “all absurd claims” that Hungary is waging a propaganda war against Romania, even if such claims take the form of slanders from academic circles. In reply to questions from the Hungarian news agency MTI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade issued a statement on Tuesday stating that Hungary continued to hope that bilateral relations with Romania’s new government can gain new impetus, as previously discussed by the countries’ two foreign ministers at a meeting in February.





The number of children enrolled in Hungarian-language schools in Slovakia is increasing

According to the results of a survey made by the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia (SZMPSZ), the number of children enrolled in Hungarian-language schools in Slovakia has increased compared to this number in 2016. During the school enrollment period for the 2017/2018 academic year, 3,505 children were enrolled in the first grade and 33 children in zero grade in Hungarian-language primary schools (This was 3402 in 2016). These numbers are not final, however, since they might grow at the start of the school year, in September. Currently, the number of Hungarian primary schools in Slovakia is 256, but two Hungarian schools will close in the next academic year.



The Association of Hungarian Entrepreneurs in Transcarpathia celebrates its 20th anniversary

On Friday, the Association of Hungarian Entrepreneurs in Transcarpathia (KMVSZ) celebrated the 20th anniversary of its establishment in Tiszapéterfalva/Pijterfolvo. Addressing the event, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the “20-year-old history of the KMVSZ proves that we should not wait for others to make our lives better, but we must take our life in our own hands.” The state secretary stressed that beside the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ), it was the KMVSZ which ensured professional background for the elaboration of the Egán Ede Economic Development Program, the Hungarian Government’s HUF 30 billion (EUR 96 million) economic development program for Transcarpathia. Mr. Potápi also announced that the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad will offers HUF 1 million (EUR 3,200.) for the 2017 operational costs of the KMVSZ.