

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

2/2016



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Zsolt Németh: Good Hungarian-Slovakian relations are not possible without Hungarian primary schools

Speaking on the Kossuth Radio program “Without Borders”, the president of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian National Assembly Zsolt Németh said that “the Hungarian issue is still present in the Carpathian Basin, and this will present a very weighty and difficult task for Hungarian diplomacy and the policy for Hungarian communities abroad.” Mr. Németh talked about the general situation and legal certainty in Hungarian communities in neighboring countries, as well as their community endeavors. The head of the foreign affairs committee said that Vojvodina Hungarians are the community whose situation has improved the most recently, with respect to Hungarian-Serbian relations. He added that Hungarian-Ukrainian relations are also inspiring hope, although the war in Eastern Ukraine has a serious negative impact on the situation of Hungarians in Transcarpathia. Regarding Hungarian-Slovakian relations, Mr. Németh said that a “change in the climate” can be observed. “What belongs together, grows together”: Mr. Németh said that this should be one of the basic slogans of Hungarian regional policy. He added that some of the fruits of this slogan can already be seen at the Slovakian-Hungarian border, since twenty-six new border crossing points have been opened, although he acknowledged that these developments have less effect on the basic demands of the Hungarian community in Slovakia: the issues of Hungarian primary schools, bilingualism and dual citizenship.



Hunor Kelemen: The primary aim is parliamentary representation

In an interview on Radio France Internationale (RFI) on Thursday, the president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that one cannot rule out the possibility of the RMDSZ being part of the Government after the 2016 parliamentary elections. The president of the RMDSZ said that parliamentary elections present a greater challenge to the party than local elections. Concerning 2017, Mr. Kelemen said that it will be a difficult and extremely significant year, since in his opinion the Constitution will be amended, public administrative and territorial reforms will take place and regionalization – which has been held over for years – will be realized. The head of the RMDSZ added that even the most sensitive problems should be discussed openly, since this is the only way to end mistrust between Hungarians and Romanians.



A compromise solution can save the Hungarian school network in Zoboralja

The Nyitra és Vidéke Célalap and the Regional Association of Zoboralja Communities held a regional parents’ meeting on 9 January at the cultural center in Kolon/Kolíňany. The organizers informed the participants of the meeting about a law



adopted by the Slovakian parliament which will enter into force from the beginning of the 2016/2017 school year and which will have a negative effect on the primary schools of the Nyitra/Nitra district. The organizers highlighted that, due to the expected number of students, only two schools (which also have upper grades) will be able to continue to operate in the Nyitra district. These two schools must be in an advantageous geographical location, in order to be accessible from the highest possible number of towns inhabited by Hungarians. They should be sovereign Hungarian institutions, directed by Hungarians and independent from Slovakian leaders. In addition, they should operate in towns with local councils which are entirely or partly Hungarian. The organizers also asked the parents to initiate the establishment of Hungarian-language nursery schools at their town councils, since there is a legal basis for this. The organizers stressed that they believe that the Hungarian school network in Zoboralja can only be saved with a compromise solution.



Commemoration marking the 74th anniversary of the Csúrog Razzia

The victims of the 1942 Hungarian razzia were commemorated in Vojvodina's Csúrog/Curug. According to Serbian historians, the cleanup which lasted two weeks, had at least 1300 innocent Serbian and Jewish victims; this number then constituted two thirds of Csúrog's population. The victims were commemorated with a funeral mass and wreath laying ceremony held at the former scaffold, the Topalov warehouse which has been turned into a museum. In addition to Serbian participants and the family members of the victims, the commemoration organized by the Razzia 1942 Memorial Committee were also attended by the representatives of the Hungarian Government and Vojvodina Hungarians.

The tender structure of the economic development program is under preparation

The president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor has said that the tender structure of the economic development program will be completed by the end of January. The head of the VMSZ added that the system must meet the requirements of the European Union, Hungary and Serbia. Mr. Pásztor said that the available sum will be spent on the supporting of small enterprises and micro economies. As it is known, the Hungarian Government launched a HUF 50 billion (EUR 160 million) economic development program in Serbia's Vojvodina. The scheme comprises HUF 30 billion (EUR 96 million) in credit, while the remaining HUF 20 billion (EUR 64 million HUF) forints will be offered as non-refundable subsidies.





The 2016 budget of Transcarpathia is adopted

At its first meeting held on 5 January 2016, the Transcarpathian County Council adopted the 2016 budget of the county, amending the temporary budget adopted on 22 December 2015. The new vote on the budget was necessary because the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the 2016 budget of the country, therefore, on the basis of the current laws in force, the counties also had to amend their final budgets in accordance with that of Ukraine. The budget of Transcarpathia – similarly to the national budget – includes several constraints. One of the most important changes is that expenses spent on education will be decreased by 26 percent compared to the previous years. This decision evoked strong debate at the meeting, since the maintenance right of vocational schools which had been possessed by the state so far, was transferred to county councils and towns with county rights. In spite of this fact, neither counties nor towns with county rights received additional financial sources to maintain these schools. The vice-president of the Transcarpathia County Council József Barta (Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ)) said that the group of the KMKSZ supported the adoption of the budget, although it did not consider it good.

