

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE  
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN  
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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## King Matthias Memorial Year is closed

At St. Stephen's Basilica in Budapest on 22 December the King Matthias Memorial Year came to an end with its closing event, which included a Holy Mass, concert and exhibition. The Memorial Year was launched by the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad to mark the 575th anniversary of King Matthias' birth and the 560th anniversary of his accession to the throne. Addressing the event, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén said that memorial years are necessary because we must commemorate our ancestors and heroes, and it is our duty to acquaint future generations with these great figures. Mr. Semjén added that these great historic figures and their legacy also give strength to people today. The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that the role and significance of King Matthias has hardly changed over the past centuries. He added that it is gratifying that the Memorial Year did not comprise formal protocol events, but real content. Speaking at the event, the director of the Magyarország Háza – which was responsible for the realization of the Memorial Year – said that their programs were accessible to Hungarian communities not only in the Carpathian Basin but also in the diaspora.

## Árpád János Potápi: Hungarian-Hungarian relations are unbreakable

Speaking to the Hungarian daily Magyar Idők, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi recalled the most important results of 2018. The state secretary highlighted that the Hungarian Government is ensuring more than HUF 47 billion for the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Program, the third phase of which will close in 2021. The state secretary stressed that it is hoped that over three years this program will help the number of children attending Hungarian nursery schools in the Carpathian Basin to grow to 60,000. Mr. Potápi also said that 2019 will be the Year of Hungarian Children Abroad and a memorial year dedicated to Hungarian prince Ferenc Rákóczi II. Recalling the greatest results of 2018, the state secretary said that the parliamentary election held on 8 April 2018 must be mentioned. Mr. Potápi again expressed his thanks to every Hungarian living abroad who registered and took part in the election. The state secretary also said that in 2018 the programs of his state secretariat – including thematic years, the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program, the Petőfi Sándor Program and many others – were completed and augmented with new elements. He said that 2018 was the year of families both in Hungary and abroad. In addition, the State Secretariat paid particular attention to supporting Hungarians' prosperity in their homeland.



## Programs of the Rákóczi Association reached 78,000 people in 2018

Speaking to Hungarian public media, the president of the Rákóczi Association Csongor Csáky said that in 2018 the Rákóczi Association had 72 larger events with which they reached 78,000 people. Mr. Csáky said that more than 6,000 people in 150 groups visited Transcarpathia, providing financial as well as moral support for local Hungarians. He added that within the school choice program, 8,000 newborns received baby diaries, and almost 20,000 Hungarian nursery school children received storybooks from the association. In September, 7,500 school children in the Carpathian Basin received scholarships in 400 locations. Mr. Csáky said it is also a great result that in April the Rákóczi Association managed to collect 650,000 supporting signatures for the Minority SafePack European Citizens' Initiative.



## The situation of Transylvanian Hungarians neither improved nor worsened in 2018

In 2018 – the centenary of the merging of Transylvania and Romania – the situation of Hungarians living in Romania neither improved nor worsened compared to the previous year. Although Hungarian political parties lobbied for the centenary year to be “the year of a new beginning”, no step forward has taken place. Negotiations on the issue were not held, but neither did an anti-Hungarian campaign take place. At the beginning of the year the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) launched a series of events named “1000 years in Transylvania, 100 years in Romania”, within which history lectures and presentations recalled the change of empires, documentaries were made about the past century of Transylvanian Hungarians, and a variety of exhibitions and events presented how Hungarians have contributed to the success of Romania.



## Year assessment by Hungarian party leaders in Slovakia

Head of the Most-Híd (Bridge party) Béla Bugár and president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Menyhárt were the guests of the Pátria Radio. The two chairmen were asked to evaluate the past year with respect to the situation of the Hungarian community in Slovakia. Recalling the main events of the year, Mr. Menyhárt highlighted the success of the Minority SafePack Initiative and the results of the municipal elections held in Slovakia. The head of the MKP also spoke about the positive results of economic development programs and the Carpathian Basin Nursery School Program launched by the Hungarian Government.





### István Pásztor: 2018 was generally successful in Vojvodina

Speaking to the Hungarian news agency MTI, the president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that 2018 was generally successful for the Hungarian community in Vojvodina. Mr. Pásztor recalled the 8 April parliamentary election in Hungary which – in his opinion – was also extremely important for Vojvodina Hungarians. He stressed that it is the local Hungarian community's basic need for the current Hungarian political force in Hungary to be able to continue its work, as this means the continuation of the positive processes affecting Vojvodina Hungarians. Mr. Pásztor also expressed his satisfaction concerning the national council elections which were held in Serbia at the beginning of November, and brought very good results for the Hungarian National Council. The head of the VMSZ also spoke about the Hungarian Government's economic development program in Vojvodina, stressing that the first phase – which came to an end – was extremely successful.



### 2018 has been the hardest year of the past seven decades in Transcarpathia

2018 has been the most difficult year for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia over the past seven decades. Because the Hungarian community was the only national minority which strongly opposed the Ukrainian nationalist policy aimed at abolishing national minority rights, the Hungarian community has been put under the kind of pressure from the Ukrainian state which it has not experienced since the 1944 Soviet invasion. The year 2018 brought negative shifts in Ukrainian-Hungarians relations, and was marked by fierce diplomatic and domestic political battles, caused by the adoption of the new Ukrainian Act on Education, which would severely restrict national minority rights. The culmination point of the crisis was the blowing up of the headquarters of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ), which happened on 28 February 2018.

