

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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Hungary's interests with relation to the Ukrainian crisis have not changed

Speaking about Ukraine, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said after the special EU summit held on Thursday that "Hungary's interests with relation to the Ukrainian crisis has have not changed, ; our interest is for Ukraine to be a democratic state which can stand on its own feet.". The Prime Minister added that Hungary wants a Ukraine in which Hungarians can feel safe. Mr. Orbán emphasized again that Hungary cannot accept and finds illegitimate the abolishment abolition of the language law, which could have ensured the official use of their native tongue for the minorities living in Ukraine Ukrainethe official use of their native tongue. The Prime Minister said that EU leaders had also had talks on the potential propositions proposals that could be made for to UkrainiansUkrainians beyond in addition to diplomacy diplomatic steps, and Mr. Orbán made a plea to the European Union to allow Ukrainian nationals to travel to the bloc.



Bășescu swears the new government into office

President of Romania Traian Bășescu and Prime Minister Victor Ponta have reached a compromise on the new RMDSZ-USL government's swearing into office. On Wednesday afternoon the Prime Minister announced that they managed to reach an agreement with the President after earlier disputes. According to President Bășescu's Wednesday report, the Prime Minister had promised him that the Government would take responsibility for its new program. As a result, the President immediately signed the decree to appoint the 26 members of the third Ponta cabinet, and the ministers – including Minister of Culture and Deputy Prime Minister Hunor Kelemen and Minister of Environment Attila Korodi – were sworn in on Wednesday evening in the presidential Cotroceni Palace.

At the swearing-in ceremony, Mr. Bășescu welcomed the RMDSZ's return to government, calling the alliance an old and reliable ally. "I can tell you: they are always reliable allies, once you have reached an agreement with them. This is my personal experience," said President Bășescu.

On Saturday, Romania's Constitutional Court rejected an opposition complaint submitted by two center-right parties contesting Tuesday's parliamentary resolution on the new government. The body rejected the petition written by the lawmakers of the Democratic Liberal Party and the People's Movement Party, describing it "unadoptable", but it will justify the decision later.

The RMDSZ submits draft law on autonomy

Péter Kovacs has told the newspaper Szabadság that the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) will submit its draft law on autonomy in this parliamentary session; this is regardless of the party's entry into government. The Secretary General of the RMDSZ Péter Kovács said that there is a congressional



decision concerning the question of autonomy which states that the RMDSZ will submit the draft to Parliament. No body of the RMDSZ is able or wants to override the decision of the congress, therefore, there is no connection between the party's entry into government and the autonomy draft law, Mr. Kovács explained.

Hungary and Slovakia join the SZNT's lawsuit

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Hungarian news agency MTI on Thursday that the Hungarian government has decided to join the lawsuit pursued by the Szekler National Council (SZNT) against the European Commission's decision at the Court of Justice of the European Union. The Ministry added that the Hungarian government had officially informed the court's forum about their decision. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated that in July 2013 the European Commission had formally refused the SZNT's European civic petition entitled "Cohesion Policy for the equality of the regions and the sustainability of regional cultures", explaining that this type of initiative does not belong to the European Commission's field of competence, and therefore it cannot make a legislative proposal on this issue. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs added that this is against the SZNT's standpoint.

The Republic of Slovakia also asked for permission to join the lawsuit initiated by head of the SZNT Balázs Izsák and the SZNT's Secretary of Foreign Affairs Attila Dabis. Mr. Izsák told MTI that the previous week they had been informed by the Court of Justice of the European Union about Slovakia's intention to join the lawsuit on the part of the defendant, the European Commission.

March on the Day of Szekler Freedom to go ahead

Balázs Izsák, leader of the Szekler National Council (SZNT), has told the Hungarian news agency MTI that on Monday – the Day of Szekler Freedom – the participants in the demonstration for autonomy will march to the main square of Târgu Mureş /Marosvásárhely, despite a prohibition issued by the Mayor's Office. Mr. Izsák said that the participants taking part in the event scheduled for 17:00 (CET) will march from the monument of Szekler martyrs to the main square on the originally announced route, but walking only on the sidewalk instead of the road, thus complying with traffic rules. The SZNT decided to go ahead with the march after the Prefect had disavowed competency in the matter, saying that the letter prohibiting the march was not a public administrative resolution. According to the march's organizers, the government's representative had thus confirmed that the letter from the Mayor's Office has no legal consequence, and that therefore the march can proceed; the Prefect has nevertheless stated that the march is illegal.



"2014 – Year of Hungarian Senior Elementary School Children Abroad" program introduced in Zselíz



The Transcarpathian basin presentation tour of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice's program "2014 – Year of Hungarian Senior Elementary School Children Abroad" has started. On Monday Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsuzsanna Répás presented the main points of the program in the first stop on the tour, in Zselíz/ Želiezovce. The program aiming to emphasize the importance of Hungarian-language education and the enhancement of education, addresses senior elementary school children living abroad and studying in schools with Hungarian teaching language in order to give up-to-date economic knowledge for youngsters, supporting them to become successful adults in their native land. The "2014 – Year of Hungarian Senior Elementary School Children Abroad" program is a continuation of the "Year of Nursery Schools" launched in 2012 and the "Year of Hungarian Junior Elementary School Children" program realized last year. After the press conference held at the program's presentation in Zselíz, Zsuzsanna Répás told the Hungarian news agency MTI that "We would like to call attention to why is it important for children to study in Hungarian." She pointed out that local teachers' remarks had been considered during the elaboration process of the program, which focuses mainly on professional orientation, talent development and the popularization of sciences.

Beneš Decrees and autonomy questions must not be taboo

Presidential candidate of the Party of Hungarian Community (MKP) Gyula Bárdos told the news agency TASR in an interview that "The issue of the Beneš Decrees and the question of autonomy must not be taboo." Responding to Béla Bugár's statement that the MKP candidate's participation in the election favours Prime Minister Robert Fico, he said that he will participate in the election not against somebody but for something. He emphasized that "It is the result of a process that for the first time a Hungarian presidential candidate is also taking part in the election. The MKP has launched a candidate in the county elections with excellent results. It is obvious that we have support," he said. Mr. Bárdos added: "We will not help the Prime Minister to become President of the Republic."

Successful cooperation between Hungary's government and the VMSZ

At the program presentation of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) in Újvidék/Novi Sad, Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice Zsuzsanna Répás said that "Togetherness is the word which can mark the activity that has been done in the field of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad during the past 4 years." Ms. Répás, who visited Vojvodina at the invitation of VMSZ leader István Pásztor, said that in politics elections are the events which mark the end of an era, and the current parliamentary term has been one of acts and laws that were adopted by the Hungarian parliament in order to rebuild policy for Hungarian communities abroad; as a result, nearly 600,000 Hungarians have applied for Hungarian citizenship, in answer to a real, living need. Ms.



Répcs encouraged the Hungarians of Vojvodina to vote in Hungary's election in April and in the Serbian special parliamentary elections.

Hungary ready to support ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine

Foreign Minister János Martonyi declared before the Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs on Wednesday that the Hungarian Government stands ready to provide immediate aid to the Hungarian community in Ukraine. The Minister called Ukraine a neighbor of strategic importance. He said that Hungarians in Transcarpathia are unwilling to speak about autonomy, and they emphatically asked him to convey to all parties their need for calm, peace, security and better economic conditions.

Turchynov refuses to sign the abolition of language law

Interim President of Ukraine Olexandr Turchynov has confirmed that he will not sign the parliamentary resolution on the abolition of the minority language law. He said that the Parliament will establish a working group that will develop a new language law "which will enhance the development of all the languages used in Ukraine." Mr. Turchynov emphasized that there will not be any discrimination in Ukraine based on language, ethnicity, religion or belief. Vitali Klitschko told a Hungarian weekly paper that his party, UDAR, is working on a new language law that – he believes – will satisfy every minority in Ukraine.

New appointments in Transcarpathia

On Tuesday the new governor of Transcarpathia, Valeriy Lunchenko, started work in Uzhhorod, after being appointed last weekend. The 32-year-old governor, who was born in Hust and also speaks Hungarian, was previously leader of the Transcarpathian organization of the Front Zmin party led by Arseniy Yatsenyuk. The Transcarpathian online newspaper Csasz Zakarpattya reported that Mr. Lunchenko's first order has been to command the disaster emergency authority of Transcarpathia to strengthen preparation for potential spring floods in order to protect the county's population; later he met demonstrators in Uzhhorod and Transcarpathian participants in the Maidan demonstrations.

On Friday the members of the Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia) Oblast Council appointed Vice-president of the the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) László Brenzovics as its first-deputy leader by a two-thirds majority. Mr. Brenzovics has informed the Hungarian news agency MTI that the members of the council asked the Ukrainian parliament to consider minority opinions – including those of Hungarians – while developing the new language law. The members of the council have also appealed to the Ukrainian government, asking it to expedite the building of



new border crossings, saying that while preparations are extremely active on the Hungarian side, they are not in the territory of Ukraine.

A Hungarian party would be banned in Ukraine

The nationalist Svoboda Transcarpathia has appealed to the Ukrainian Attorney General's Office, asking it to prohibit the Democratic Party of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDP), because of its "anti-Ukrainian and anti-democratic activity." According to the petition, István Gajdos took part in leading demonstrators, together with two other members of the Party of the Regions of Ukraine. The nationalist organization is calling upon the members of the UMDP to leave their "disreputable" leader, to leave the party and to condemn its activity.