

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

43/2015



PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Commemorations on the 59th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian revolution

At a memorial to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution held at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics on Thursday, Minister of Defense István Simicskó said that “Courage and the desire for freedom occupy an important place in the Hungarian character.” In his speech the Minister stressed that “The heroes of 1956 showed an example of bravery and resistance to all of humanity.” At the end of the memorial, a wreath was placed at the University’s commemorative plaque to the 1956 Revolution, after which a torchlight procession began from the University of Technology to the József Bem Rakpart. The procession was attended by a significant number of Hungarian students living outside Hungary.

On Friday morning on Kossuth Lajos Square in Budapest, in front of the Hungarian Parliament building, the Hungarian National Flag was raised with military honors to mark the 59th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and fight for independence. Speaking in front of the building of the Hungarian Radio in Bródy Sándor Street in Budapest, Minister for National Economy Mihály Varga said that the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 was a life-changing event of the 20th century. He added that the main message of the events which took place 59 years ago is that we should insist on our values bravely, and dare to stand up for them, believing that we are right.

Commemorations marking the 59th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian revolution were also held in several other towns of Hungary, in neighboring countries and in the Western diaspora as well.



Hundreds of watch fires lit to demand autonomy in Szeklerland

Over the night of 24-25 October watch fires were lit at hundreds of locations in border areas of Romania’s Szeklerland to demand the area’s right to self-governance. The event was part of a protest organized by the Szekler National Council (SZNT). According to estimates by the SZNT, the event was attended by tens of thousands of participants. The demonstration – which began on Saturday evening with ecumenical services in 68 border settlements of the Hungarian-majority historic and ethnographic region (which is not officially recognized) – ended in the protest’s proclamation being read out aloud and participants marching to nearby high ground to light watch fires and direct beams from cars’ headlights into the sky with mirrors. The event took place without incident, although in Gyergyószentmiklós/Gheorgheni – one of the cities taking part in the demonstration – the Romanian police confiscated the wood the local organizers intended to use for a watch fire. The protest was held to draw attention from around the world to the existence of Szeklerland and its struggle for self-determination. The proclamation stated that “Based on this right, we demand self-government of Szeklerland within the state [of Romania]. We insist on the



borders of Szeklerland comprising eight historic districts (szék) and 153 local self-governments, which is to be made final by a referendum of local communities’.”

Péter Szijjártó emphasizes the importance of Hungarian-Romanian cooperation

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said on Saturday evening that “mutual trust between Hungary and Romania should be established by means of pragmatic cooperation, in a way established with Slovakia.” The minister said that in the Carpathian Basin, strong tension might take place in bilateral relations due to the historic heritage, therefore steps promoting mutual trust are always very important. Mr. Szijjártó added that in the case of Slovakia, pragmatic cooperation in the field of the economy, energy and transport has laid the foundations of trust through which even difficult questions can be settled more easily. The minister added that Hungary would like to achieve this with Romania as well: to lay the foundations of mutual trust through which difficult issues can be settled successfully.

Dorin Florea: the installation of bilingual street signs is unlawful

The mayor of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş Dorin Florea confirmed on Wednesday that according to the task booklet made public by the mayor’s office, the local municipality would spend 1 million lei (HUF 69 million) on street signs which are not bilingual in reality. On Wednesday, the representatives of the Civil Commitment Movement (Cemo) issued a statement drawing attention to the fact that the mayor’s office of Marosvásárhely had announced a tender on the preparation of 7,188 street signs, but declared that among them only 1,715 street signs could be bilingual. Furthermore, in the case of bilingual street signs the mayor’s office regulated the size of the signs in such a way which leaves no space for the Hungarian names. Two weeks ago the Deputy Mayor of Marosvásárhely András Peti welcomed the fact that a tender had been announced on the preparation of new street signs, but after he was informed that the street signs would not be bilingual in practice, the political group of his party (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania) appealed to the administrative court. The local representatives of the RMDSZ also reported the issue to the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD).

Péter Szijjártó and József Berényi discuss the situation of Hungarians in Slovakia

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó received the president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi in his office. The head of the MKP informed the minister about the election preparations of his party, as well as the current situation of the Hungarian community in Slovakia. The parties agreed that it would be unfavorable both from the point of view of Slovakian-Hungarian bilateral relations and Hungarians in Slovakia if the atmosphere of the Slovakian election



campaigns becomes tense due to provocations. Mr. Szijjártó and Mr. Berényi also agreed that it is of the utmost importance that the Hungarian community in Slovakia has a strong representation in the Slovakian parliament after the approaching elections.



István Pásztor: the Hungarian-Serbian reconciliation process is drawing to an end

Speaking at a commemoration in Serbia's Csúrog/Curug in memory of the victims of the 1944-45 massacre in Vojvodina, the president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor said that the process of reconciliation between Hungarians and Serbians is drawing to an end. The commemoration was attended by the representatives of political parties, municipalities and civil society organizations, as well as the representatives of Hungarian diplomacy and private individuals, who laid wreaths at the memorial of the victims. The memorial was set up two years ago in the presence of Hungarian President János Áder and his Serbian counterpart Tomislav Nikolic, who paid tribute to the innocent people executed during the Second World War and in the years following it. The State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad welcomed the participants of the commemoration in a letter, stating that "it is our turn to prove for the victims that the life of Hungarians in Vojvodina can be happy, even if it is difficult, and even if our ancestors suffered such tragedies, since Hungarians in Vojvodina have a future."

A new program is launched focusing on the economic development of Vojvodina, supported by the Hungarian government

Speaking in Vojvodina's Szabadka/Subotica after talks with the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor, State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy Levente Magyar announced that a new program will be launched soon focusing on the economic development of Vojvodina, and supported by the Hungarian government. The state secretary added that the program will be aimed mainly at the development of agriculture, tourism and small and medium-size enterprises. Mr. Magyar added that the kin-state pays particular attention to the Hungarian community in Vojvodina, which is "a well-organized community, suitable for effective cooperation, since it is not fragmented but has efficient advocacy." The state secretary also expressed his hope that this economic cooperation and the program aimed at Vojvodina's economic development will help to stop emigration and enhance Hungarians' permanence in their homeland.





The cooperation of Hungarians in Transcarpathia has led to success

Ukrainian municipal elections took place in Transcarpathia without incident. According to the data of the Ukrainian Central Election Commission (CVK) made public on Monday, the voter turnout in Transcarpathia was 49 percent. The turnout was highest in the district of Volóc/Volovec (57 percent), while the lowest number of voters was registered in the district of Técső/ Tiachiv (30 percent). On behalf of the Hungarian government, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad and president of the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) Zsolt Semjén welcomed the results of the cooperation of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. The Deputy Prime Minister highlighted that even on the basis of preliminary results it can be declared that the joint list of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDSZ) has certainly reached the 5 percent threshold necessary to win seats in the Transcarpathian County Council. "The data prove that the message of cooperation has reached the members of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, and the fact that Ukrainian citizens living or studying in Hungary took part in the election, also contributed to this success," Mr. Semjén said.

During the week before the Ukrainian municipal elections, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán asked Hungarians living in Ukraine to participate in the local elections, and to cast their votes for the Hungarian lists. Following a meeting in Parliament with the president of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) László Brenzovics, the Prime Minister told journalists that it is important that Hungarians' participation in the elections has appropriate weight, authority and quality. Mr. Orbán also urged Hungarians who have moved from Ukraine to live, study or work in Hungary – but who still have the right to vote in Ukraine – to go to the polls.

