

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

2/2014



MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND JUSTICE
STATE SECRETARIAT FOR HUNGARIAN
COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Zsuzsanna Répás' end-of-year interview

In her end-of-year interview for the Hungarian news agency MTI, Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Zsuzsanna Répás highlighted the educational programs and institutional developments which had taken place in Hungarian communities abroad. The Deputy State Secretary said that we can already experience some developments due to the already existing programs, and these programs will continue in 2014. Concerning educational initiatives, the most important thing is to provide a full spectrum of education to Hungarian communities abroad, she added. Ms. Répás stressed that education is the key to keeping future generations within the Hungarian community. While in 2012 the focus was put on Hungarian kindergartens abroad, 2013 was the year of Hungarian elementary schools abroad, in accordance with the strategy for Hungarian communities abroad. In 2014 emphasis will be put on older elementary school pupils, and support for their skills and future guidance will be given priority.

Zsolt Németh: The future of the simplified naturalization procedure depends on election outcome

On 2 January, at his first press conference in 2014, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Zsolt Németh said that the future of the simplified naturalization procedure will also depend on the outcome of the elections taking place this year. Mr. Németh announced that 95,000 Hungarian citizens living abroad have registered to vote in the Hungarian parliamentary election this spring. He added that the registration period will end fifteen days prior to the election. Mr. Németh stressed that there are 900,000 potential Hungarian voters living abroad, 350,000 of whom have permanent residence in Hungary (most of them are in Germany and the United Kingdom). Mr. Németh called the Act on dual citizenship one of the emblematic laws of the current government period.

The State Secretary emphasized that 2014 will be a year of elections in several countries in the region: in Slovakia and Romania presidential elections will take place, and it is also likely that early elections will be held in Ukraine and Serbia.



Árpád Pótápi: for the future of Szeklers there is no alternative to autonomy

János Árpád Pótápi, head of the Hungarian Parliament's National Cohesion Committee, gave an address in Bonyhád, at the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Massacre of Madéfalva/ Siculeni. Mr. Pótápi said that for the future of Szeklers there is no alternative to autonomy, as this is the only possibility for preserving historic traditions, the Hungarian language and culture. In Madéfalva on 7 January 1764, the Austrian army killed hundreds of Szeklers rebelling against Vienna's decision to set up regiments to guard the borders. Nearly 300 people – including many Szeklers among them – gathered in the valley town to commemorate the massacre of Szeklers, known as the "Siculicidium".



József Berényi: 2014 will be a dynamic year in Slovak politics

In his end-of-year interview, leader of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi said that the events of 2013 proved that the Slovak prime minister's promise to keep the status quo for minorities is no longer valid. According to Mr. Berényi, by keeping the status quo what the Slovak government means is leaving minority laws unchanged; but meanwhile it keeps adopting measures that limit the rights and opportunities of the Hungarian community living in Slovakia. Mr. Berényi pointed out that the Slovak government's recent measures – among others – reduced the budget for cultural programs of minorities and endangered the existence of small schools. The MKP leader added that the result of the recent county elections in Slovakia was the biggest Hungarian success in 2013, through which the Hungarian community gained strong representation in the county administration.



A working group will be established in January to harmonize the Vojvodina Charter with the Serbian constitution

In January a working group will be established within the Vojvodina Chamber of Deputies and the Serbian Parliament in order to achieve harmonization between the region's charter and the Serbian constitution. According to the Serbian constitutional court's ruling of 5 January, two-thirds of the Serbian province's charter is either partly or wholly inconsistent with the Serbian constitution. The Constitutional Court, however, decided to postpone by six months the ruling's appearance in Serbia's Official Gazette. Within the next six months, the Vojvodina Chamber of Deputies and the Serbian Parliament will have time to seek harmonization between the Serbian constitution and those elements of the Vojvodina Charter which the court has ruled to be unconstitutional. Until then the charter remains in force. According to István Pásztor, leader of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ), rather than harmonizing Vojvodina's current charter with the Serbian constitution, a new charter should be adopted.

