

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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The Forum of Representatives from the Carpathian Basin holds session in Budapest

On Friday, the Forum of Representatives from the Carpathian Basin (KMKF) held its plenary session in Budapest. Addressing the event, the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly László Kövér said that keeping Hungarian workers in the Carpathian Basin is crucial for the region in the long run, with particular attention to Hungarian communities living abroad. The House Speaker highlighted that labor migration was not a uniquely Hungarian problem, pointing out that neighboring countries deal with greater labor shortages than Hungary or Hungarian diaspora communities. Nevertheless, Hungarian politicians must find solutions to Hungarians' problems, he said. He added that over the coming years, Hungary will have to focus its efforts on managing the labor market in a way that creates stable work environments for all Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén said that so far 825,000 people have received Hungarian citizenship under the simplified naturalization procedure. The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that Hungary is allocating unprecedented levels of funding for the support of Hungarian communities abroad, adding that the Bethlen Gábor Fund Management Ltd. and the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad has HUF 22 billion (EUR 70 million) for this purpose. Mr. Semjén said that the Hungarian government will launch an economic development program in Ukraine's Transcarpathia similar to the HUF 50 billion (EUR 159 million) program launched recently to strengthen Hungarian economic life in Vojvodina. Mr. Semjén reiterated that Hungary's policy for Hungarian communities abroad is based on principled grounds, and must not depend on successor states' discretion or global politics. He added that Hungarians abroad have never asked for rights which are unprecedented or are not based on universal human rights.

István Grezsa: Hungarian communities abroad are an important resource

On Friday, at a job fair and professional discussion day for Hungarian students living abroad and studying at Hungary's universities organized by the Balassi Institute, government commissioner István Grezsa said that the Hungarian government considers Hungarian communities abroad to be an important resource, but its aim is that these communities find their Hungarian identity and prosper in their homelands. Regarding support for Hungarian communities abroad, the government commissioner said that helping young Hungarian entrepreneurs outside Hungary is a key question. Mr. Grezsa added that the simplified naturalization procedure Hungary launched in 2011 is helping to stop the decline of the Hungarian community in Vojvodina, and is functioning as a "life-saving tool" in Transcarpathia for young Hungarian men who have been called up to participate in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.



Hunor Kelemen: we should strengthen Hungarians' weakened sense of security

Speaking at a session of the Forum of the Hungarian Representatives from the Carpathian Basin (KMKF), the president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that "Hungarians in Romania are stigmatized both at home and on the international stage; this is very dangerous, since it could lead to our legitimate demands – the use of the mother tongue and national symbols, as well as different forms of autonomy – being branded as political aspirations which threaten security". The head of the RMDSZ said that his party has to face a dozen anti-Hungarian legislative proposals in the Romanian parliament, and that it is standing up against these attempts both in domestic and international forums. He added that "since Romania's geostrategic role has increased in importance, Romania is taking actions which it did not dare to take before. For example, it is initiating unprecedented lawsuits against Hungarians. He added that recently the mayors of Csíkmadaras/Mădăraș and Szováta/Sovata have been fined because they raised a Hungarian and a Szekler flag on the building of their office.



Előd Kincses brings the issue of people fined on the Szekler Freedom Day to court

The lawyer of Transylvanian Hungarians who were fined because they took part in the organization of the march on the Day of the Szekler Freedom – or simply participated in the event – has brought the issue of the fines to the court of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureș. He asked the court to annul the 67 indictments imposing the fines. Mr. Kincses – who was also fined – told the Hungarian news agency MTI that he has appealed on behalf of the president of the Szekler National Council (SZNT) Balázs Izsák, and separately on behalf of the 42 people who were fined as organizers of the event, and on behalf of 24 people who were fined because they participated in the march. The lawyer added that four of his clients did not even take part in the demonstration.

As was reported in the press, the Romanian police fined a large number of people who organized the demonstration held on the Day of the Szekler Freedom on 10 March in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureș, as well as many of those who took part in it.



The leaders of the MKP resign

At the meeting of the National Council (OT) of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP), the presidency of the party resigned, thereby accepting responsibility for its unsuccessful showing in the parliamentary elections in Slovakia on 5 March. The election of the new party leaders will take place on 11 June, in Slovakia's Érsekújvár/Nové Zámky. At the meeting the National Council also analyzed the



results of the parliamentary elections, and discussed the circumstances of the establishment of the new government coalition and the new government's priorities. For the time being the MKP will not have talks with the Most-Híd (Bridge) Slovak-Hungarian mixed party; the new leaders of the party will decide on the opportunity for potential cooperation. Finally, the National Council of the MKP discussed the issue of choice of schools in Slovakia, encouraging Hungarian parents to choose a Hungarian-language school for their children, providing them an opportunity to study in their mother tongue.



The President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian National Assembly Zsolt Németh visits Vojvodina

At the invitation of the head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor, the president of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian National Assembly Zsolt Németh visited Vojvodina. Mr. Németh started his visit in Zombor. During his stay in the region, he had talks on economic relations with representatives of the Nyugat-Bácska region, the opening of the border and the policy for Hungarian communities abroad. The head of the foreign affairs committee said that currently Hungary is working on an economic development strategy which would enhance Vojvodina's "catch up" process. Mr. Németh held talks with the representatives of the town council and the Hungarian National Council, pledging that Hungary will continue to support Hungarians living in Vojvodina with both financial and political resources. During his official stay in the region, Mr. Németh visited several towns where he gave presentations on the kin-state's economic development program focusing on the strengthening of Vojvodina's economic life, as well as the results of Hungary's policy for Hungarian communities abroad.

As was reported in the press, in November 2015 Hungary launched a HUF 50 billion (EUR 159 million) economic and regional development program to support and strengthen the Hungarian community in Vojvodina.



The KMKSZ holds its 17th assembly in Beregszász

On Saturday, the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) held its 17th congress in Transcarpathia's Beregszász/Berehove. Addressing the event, the president of the KMKSZ and deputy of the Ukrainian parliament László Brenzovics said that he believes that in spite of the current difficulties, the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia has an opportunity to survive the current Ukrainian crisis in a stronger condition. At the assembly held at the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Hungarian State Institute, Mr. Brenzovics recalled that it is due to the KMKSZ – Ukraine's oldest social organization, which was established in February 1989 – that today we have a Hungarian higher educational institution and a Hungarian theater in Beregszász. He added that all of this would not have been possible without the support and solidarity



of the Hungarian nation and the kin-state, and he expressed his deepest gratitude for this. However, he added that if the Transcarpathian Hungarian community had not been able to help itself, all external help would have been in vain.

Speaking at the event, Hungary's State Secretary for Justice Pál Völner said that recently news about Ukraine "has been pushed into the background". The state secretary added that, in the media, news about illegal migration has displaced that on Ukrainian and Transcarpathian Hungarians. Nevertheless Hungary continues to pay extra attention to this area, and is also encouraging Europe to focus on the situation in this region.

