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László Kövér dedicates national flag monument in Hódmezővásárhely

On Sunday a national flag symbolizing the national cohesion of Hungarians and the injustice of the 1920 Treaty of Trianon was dedicated in Szent István Square in Hódmezővásárhely. Speaking at the ceremony, the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament László Kövér said that today our national flags declare that with concerted strength we have won our battles fought for the Hungarian nation over the past four years, and we are ready for future struggles – not prejudicing anybody’s interests, but always standing up consistently for the interests of Hungarians. Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office and Member of Parliament for the region János Lázár recalled that eighty years ago, at Pentecost in 1934, the residents of Hódmezővásárhely set up a national flag in Kossuth Square, drawing attention to national cohesion and their belief in community. After the Second World War the flag was torn down, and a Soviet war monument was erected in its place, which was removed in 1956 by the residents of Hódmezővásárhely. The Minister expressed his thanks to the four hundred donors who contributed to the building of the monument, which was designed by sculptor Attila Nagy.



Hunor Kelemen presents his party’s draft law on Szeklerland’s autonomy

On Thursday the head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) presented his party’s draft law on the territorial autonomy of Szeklerland and released the document for public debate. At a press conference held after the event, Mr. Kelemen said that “This is a legitimate political step for preserving our community, its language and culture.” He added that “The RMDSZ is a factor for stability in Romania, and it has had claims for autonomy since its establishment, which – as well as its efforts for Euro-Atlantic integration – have always been a consistent aim of the party.” Speaking to the Hungarian online newspaper Index, Mr. Kelemen said that “We must not oppose territorial autonomy or cultural autonomy,” adding that “achieving cultural autonomy remains extremely important for Hungarians living in diaspora in order to preserve their identity and operate and maintain their educational and cultural institutions.”

The draft law presented on Thursday has been criticized and rejected by almost all Romanian politicians and analysts. Answering journalists’ questions on Friday, Prime Minister Victor Ponta said that he does not support the territorial autonomy of Szeklerland. He added that the initiators of the draft law are aware of the fact that neither the Party of Social Democrats (PSD) nor the other Romanian parties support it. The Prime Minister said he considers the presentation of the draft law to be part of the presidential election campaign.

The draft law was not an unqualified success among Hungarian politicians in Transylvania either. Hungarian politicians argued that autonomy itself is lost in the draft law, and the document does not refer to historical Szeklerland.



Transylvanian MEP László Tőkés and the head of the Szekler National Council (SZNT) Balázs Izsák also criticized the draft law, saying that – instead of presenting the autonomy program of three levels – the RMDSZ has laid emphasis on the establishment of its legal framework, subjecting it to the adoption of a new constitution. Mr. Tőkés and Mr. Izsák added that by this the RMDSZ is endangering the community consensus on autonomy.

The EMNP has collected the necessary number of signatures for the election

At a press conference held in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca on Sunday, the head of the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (EMNP) Tibor T. Toró signed the signature collection form supporting the candidature of the party's candidate Zsolt Szilágyi in the Romanian presidential election. This gesture from the president was symbolic, since he was the two hundred thousandth person signing the form (the number of signatures needed to put forward a candidate for the election). The number of signatures has not yet been finalized, since a further ten to twenty thousand more signatures are expected to arrive from the "region". The number of signatures will be finalized by Tuesday at the latest, when the party will submit to the Election Commission the package necessary for Mr. Szilágyi's candidature. The head of the EMNP underlined that the number of Romanians who signed the form was surprisingly high, adding that this might mean that they find the EMNP's concept of a federal state "convincing".



Slovak Constitutional Court rejects petition connected to citizenship

The Slovak Constitutional Court, led by its president Ivetta Macejková, has rejected – on formal grounds – the petition submitted by 30 representatives of the opposition. Ms. Macejková said that the number of votes – neither those in favor nor those against – did not reach the necessary threshold of seven, which would give a majority. The Constitutional Court has 13 members, but is currently operating with 11 judges. The group submitting the complaint – led by Gábor Gál (Híd) – had referred to the article of the Constitution which states that "nobody can be deprived of their citizenship against their will". Mr. Gál added that he is completely unsatisfied with the decision and the justification. He said that this case was a precedent of legal "evasion", and that the judges exploited the procedural excuse that if a petition does not receive the majority of votes at the plenum of the Constitutional Court, it has to be rejected automatically.

Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian Communities abroad Zsolt Semjén reacted to the decision of the Constitutional Court in a statement, expressing the profound disappointment of the Hungarian government. He reiterated that this is the law which states that those who acquire the citizenship of another state are deprived of their Slovak citizenship. The Deputy Prime Minister added that the Czech Republic, in



contrast, adopted a law on 1 January this year allowing dual citizenship. Mr. Semjén added that the Slovak Act on Citizenship, which was adopted as a reaction to Hungary's simplified naturalization procedure, mostly concerns Slovaks who are not citizens of Hungary, but of other countries.

The head of the KMKSZ receives a safe seat in the Ukrainian parliamentary elections

At its meeting held on Saturday in Beregszász/Berehove, the largest advocacy organization of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia – the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) – approved the nomination of the head of the party László Brenzovics on the President's party list for the early parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

As previously reported, last week the President of the KMKSZ László Brenzovics was offered 62nd place on President Petro Poroshenko's party list (Petro Poroshenko's Bloc), which is considered a safe seat in Parliament. The list of candidates participating in the early parliamentary election scheduled for 26 October was adopted last Sunday by the congress of Petro Poroshenko's Bloc.

László Brenzovics emphasized that in the current situation the most important task of the KMKSZ is to preserve the security of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. He added that "The KMKSZ – supported by the Hungarian government – has taken all possible measures for the establishment of a Hungarian electoral district, but this has been rejected. The decision of the Central Election Commission (CVK) is illegal and unfair, but we cannot change it until the approaching elections, since all legal opportunities have already been exhausted. We have to make a pragmatic decision in this question, therefore we can either accept the 62nd place on the list – which is considered a safe place – or launch individual candidates in the current electoral districts and lose the elections again."

NÖB: Croatia's policy for nationalities is exemplary

On Wednesday the Committee of National Cohesion (NÖB) held an extramural meeting in Croatia's Eszék/Osijek. At the press conference held after the event, the president of the NÖB Károly Pánczél said that Croatia's policy for nationalities is exemplary. Mr. Pánczél added that Hungarians in Croatia have extensive cultural autonomy: they can use their mother tongue and national symbols, they have Hungarian-language nursery school and school instruction and can also hold church services in the Hungarian language. Due to political autonomy, Hungarians can elect national local governments freely and they are also entitled to have one seat in Croatia's parliament.