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Árpád János Potápi addresses 41st Szekler Ball in Bonyhád

Addressing the 41st Szekler Ball in Bonyhád, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi said that today not only adults but even children and young people are proud of their Szekler origin. The state secretary recalled that the Szeklers of Bukovina started to become widely known in 1978 when a group of Szeklers living in Tolna county (Izmény, Aparhant and Bonyhád) won one of Hungary's most famous talent contest, the "Röpülj páva". Mr. Potápi said that this success encouraged young people to be proud of their Szekler origin and to pay more attention on the cultivation of traditions. He added that after the contest, more and more Szekler associations and folk dance groups were formed in which Szeklers could "show themselves" and their unique cultural heritage. Mr. Potápi added that the cultivation of traditions is extremely important for people living in Tolna county and is proved by the fact that hundreds of people attend the Szekler Ball in Bonyhád every year. He also recalled that in 1989 the National Association of Szeklers from Bukovina was formed which was followed by a lot of important events: the association created its coat of arms, established its own center and established a traditional Szekler house in Kismányok.

Katalin Szili: European Parliamentary elections are important for national minorities

Speaking at a round table discussion in Szeged, Prime Ministerial Commissioner Katalin Szili said that the approaching European Parliamentary elections are extremely important from the point of view of autochthonous national minorities. Ms. Szili stressed that it is of crucial importance that the new European Parliament and new European Commission support the proposals serving the interests of national minorities. The Prime Ministerial Commissioner stressed that 10% of the population of Europe – at least 50 million people – belong to autochthonous national minorities. Speaking abroad the approaching elections, Ms. Szili stressed that it is not only the question of migration which is a "demarcation line" between political forces in Europe today, but the fact whether these political forces support "the Europe of the nations or the European United States." Ms. Szili stressed that over the past 15 years, the number of Hungarians living abroad decreased by 10%, adding that the cause of this phenomenon – first of all – is demography. She added that regional differences can also be observed: while in Slovakia assimilation is the main problem in this respect, in Vojvodina and Transcarpathia emigration – the high number of people leaving their homeland – means the greatest problem. Ms. Szili added that this is why the Hungarian Government – first of all, the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Human Capacities – ensure more and more financial support for Hungarian communities living abroad year by year.



Péter Szijjártó: Budapest is ready to offer financial support for the establishment of a Hungarian faculty at the MOGYE

Answering journalists' questions in Bucharest concerning the situation at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş (MOGYE), Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said that if the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) requests, the Hungarian Government can offer financial help for the establishment of a Hungarian faculty at the MOGYE. Mr. Szijjártó added that he mentioned this option to his Romanian counterpart, informing him that the Hungarian Government and the Richter would be ready to ensure financial support for the establishment of the Hungarian faculty at the university. Mr. Szijjártó added that he told his Romanian counterpart that this solution – in his mind – would be a satisfying one for both parties.

As has been reported, the Hungarian community has been asking for a separate and independent Hungarian faculty for years, but no step forward has been taken in this issue yet. Moreover, the board of the university has recently decided on the establishment of a new examination system which discriminates against students whose mother tongue is Hungarian.

New dormitory for Csángó Hungarians inaugurated in Bákó

On Friday, a new dormitory for Csángó Hungarians was inaugurated in Bákó/Bacău. Speaking to the Hungarian news agency, MTI the chairman of the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Romania (RMPSZ) Botond Burus Siklódi said that the dormitory will host 15-20 students. He added that those students will have an opportunity to live in the dormitory who took part in the Moldova Hungarian education program and from the 9th grade continue their studies in one of the schools in Bákó/Bacău. The head of the RMPSZ added that the dormitory was built from donations collected by the Déva Szent Ferenc Foundation between 2004 and 2006.



First round of the presidential election in Slovakia will be held on 16 March

On 1 February, the official list of candidates for the presidential election in Slovakia was published. Out of the 18 people who applied for the post, the candidacy of 15 people has been approved by the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Andrej Danko. The first round of the election will be held on 16 March. According to the laws in Slovakia, candidates have to collect 15,000 supporting signatures from voters or win the support of at least 15 MPs of the Slovakian Parliament (which has 150 MPs). The deadline for the collection of signatures was 31



January 2019 and the list of candidates was published on 1 February. The list includes active politicians, party leaders as well as independent candidates and entrepreneurs. The list has two Hungarian candidates: the chairman of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Menyhárt and the head of the Slovak-Hungarian mixed party Most-Híd (Most) Béla Bugár. The aim of József Menyhárt with his participation is “to make the Hungarian community visible in Slovakia.” Mr. Menyhárt said that the presidential elections is an excellent opportunity to draw attention to Hungarians and their problems, adding that 5 years ago the head of the Csemadok, Gyula Bárdos – as the sole Hungarian candidate – achieved 5%. The head of the MKP added that this step was important since after 2010, the questions concerning Hungarians disappeared from public life.



Discussion in Brussels on the situation of Vojvodina Hungarians

Speaking in Brussels, MEPs Kinga Gál and Andor Deli (Fidesz) together with the chairman of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor stressed that the European Parliamentary elections – which are scheduled to take place on 26 May 2019 – are extremely important from the point of view of national minorities. Mr. Pásztor stressed, however, that the openness of Serbia towards issues concerning national minorities is much better than in neighboring countries – where Hungarians also live in a high number. He added that it is important that the Hungarian community in Serbia is handled not as a “destabilizing factor”. MEP Andor Deli stressed that it is the first time that Hungarians living in Vojvodina will have an opportunity “to have a say in European politics”, expressing the hope that Hungarians will grasp this opportunity.



Hungarian economic development programs in Croatia receive great interest

The Hungarian Government will continue to support Hungarian entrepreneurs in Croatia as part of its economic development program. The new calls of applications were announced by the Economica Hungarica Foundation in Csúza/Suza – the foundation which is responsible for the implementation of the program in Croatia. The head of the foundation Hajnalka Palizs-Tóth stressed that in the first round in 2019, three new calls for application will be launched the aim of which is to serve Hungarians’ permanence and prosperity in their homeland.

