

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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HUF 140 million allocated to junior school programs for Hungarian communities abroad

This year HUF 140 million will be available for junior school programs for Hungarian communities abroad, focusing on talent management, guidance for later life, personality development and science promotion. At a press conference held in Budapest on 14 January, Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Zsuzsanna Répás said that with the raised level of funding, wide-ranging programs and events will be organized during this thematic year. She stressed that the main goal remains to strengthen Hungarian education for Hungarians living beyond the borders, making it appealing to parents and students alike.

A methodology package will again be compiled for teachers, while conferences and career orientation training courses will be organized as well. One of these will focus specifically on natural sciences, and another on talent management. Two tours will be arranged in the Carpathian Basin – one will be a studies orientation course focusing on 7th and 8th grade primary school pupils, to help them find the most appropriate means and location for advancing their studies, and more light will be shed on Hungarian vocational education. The other tour will focus on economic, financial and business issues. Region-specific training courses are planned, dealing with themes considered important by local teachers.

According to Mrs. Répás, the thematic programs were developed in accordance with the Strategic Framework for Hungarian Communities Abroad. She said that, while 2012 was the thematic year of Hungarian kindergartens abroad, 2013 was the year of Hungarian primary schools abroad. She stressed that the idea of Hungarian education abroad had been highlighted and parents were informed about the importance of native language schooling in such a way that they could rely on local educational associations.

President János Áder sets the date of parliamentary elections for 6 April

President of Hungary Janos Áder has set the date of parliamentary elections for April 6. This year will be the first in which Hungarian citizens who are not normally resident in Hungary can vote in a Hungarian election. In a welcome speech for foreign ambassadors in Budapest the President said that 2014 will be the year of elections and anniversaries. He emphasized that Hungary will continue its efforts to promote international cooperation based on mutual respect, good neighborly relations, reinforced Euro-Atlantic alliances, and assertion of universal human and civil rights. According to the President, while the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War reminds us of the importance of universal peace, the 70th anniversary of Holocaust deportations from Budapest warns us that honourable people can never side with genocide, segregation, or xenophobia.



Zsolt Semjén: the Wekerle Plan helps the prosperity of Hungarian communities abroad

At the third Economic Forum of the Carpathian Basin in Székesfehérvár on 16 January, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén said that the Hungarian government's Wekerle Plan helps Hungarian communities living in neighboring countries to prosper in their countries of birth, assists businesses in Hungary in expanding their markets and generates economic growth in the Carpathian Basin. Mr. Semjén emphasized that Hungary supports Hungarian communities abroad in all spheres of life, including cross-border cooperation and economic development.



Governing Social-Liberal Union (USL) wants to hold referendum in Romania at the same time as the European parliamentary elections

Romanian Minister of the Interior Radu Stroe has announced that the governing Social-Liberal Union (USL) wants to hold a referendum on constitutional amendments in Romania at the same time as the European parliamentary elections in May. The USL suspended the process of constitutional amendments last year because it wanted to hold the referendum confirming the new constitution with a new validity threshold of 30 per cent turnout, as defined in the new law on referenda. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) does not support the USL's plan. The RMDSZ leader Hunor Kelemen said, however, that the RMDSZ welcomes the plan to reintroduce the proportional, party-list electoral system in Romania.

Hungary's new ambassador to Romania presents credentials

Botond Zákonyi, Hungary's new ambassador to Bucharest, presented his credentials to Romanian President Traian Băsescu on 15 January. Ambassador Zákonyi said that the relationship with Romania is probably the most complex of Hungary's bilateral ties. He added that during his mandate Hungarians living in Romania will be able to vote in Hungarian elections for the first time, marking a historic moment. As previously reported, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs waited an unusually long period of time – several months – before approving as new Hungarian ambassador the historian and researcher in neighborhood policy and policy for Hungarian communities abroad.



So far 701 people have lost their Slovak citizenship

Between July 2010 and January 2014 a total of 701 people lost their Slovak citizenship because of the Slovak citizenship law. Ivan Netík, a spokesperson from the Slovak Interior Ministry, informed TASR news agency that forty-seven of them have had their Slovak passports confiscated because they acquired Hungarian passports; the largest category of people having passports confiscated (284 people) had obtained Czech citizenship. Mr. Netík added that a draft law has been prepared which aims to resolve



the situation of those who have lost their citizenship, and the Slovak government and parliament will probably discuss the legal amendments in the first session of 2014. If the amendments are adopted, Slovak citizenship may be reinstated, but not automatically and only under certain conditions.



Day of Hungarian Culture – 2014 Cultural Forum of the Carpathian Basin in Senta/Zenta, Vojvodina

Roundtable talks organized on the Day of Hungarian Culture in Senta/Zenta, Vojvodina on 18 January focused on the importance of local values within universal Hungarian culture. Representatives of Hungarian cultural umbrella organizations in the Carpathian Basin discussed joint strategic goals. At the event, Government Commissioner László L. Simon said that “It is a strategic question for the current Hungarian government to enable Hungarian communities abroad – regardless of which country they live in – to be able to live and prosper, keep their language, and grow financially, intellectually and in number in their country of birth.”

Working group established to harmonize the Vojvodina Charter with the Serbian constitution

On its website on 15 January the Vojvodina Chamber of Deputies announced that the President of the Chamber of Deputies has appointed the members of a working group given the task of harmonizing the Vojvodina Charter with the Serbian constitution. István Pásztor, leader of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ), said earlier that the draft – which has to be adopted first by the Vojvodina Parliament and then by the Serbian Parliament – is expected to be ready within four to six weeks. According to Mr. Pásztor, the new Charter will be adopted by 6 June, thus within the timeframe given by the Constitutional Court.

The European Parliament has adopted Serbia’s evaluation for the year 2013, which includes important recommendations concerning Vojvodina Hungarians and the autonomous province of Vojvodina.

