

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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Zsolt Semjén: 750,000 naturalization requests, 700,000 citizenship oaths

Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian Communities Abroad and president of the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) Zsolt Semjén has announced that the total number of naturalization requests has reached 750,000 and 700,000 people have taken the oath of citizenship. The Deputy Prime Minister was of the opinion that the goal of having one million new Hungarian citizens through the simplified naturalisation procedure by the end of the term, i.e. by early 2018, is one that can be achieved. The President of the Christian Democratic People's Party also said that according to plans, the number of people not naturalized but recognized as Hungarian citizens will also reach one hundred thousand by the end of the term. The parents or grandparents of these citizens typically emigrated to the US, Canada or Australia from the territory of modern Hungary; they are Hungarian citizens by birth, as they are descendants of Hungarian citizens, but their Hungarian citizenship had not been previously recognized.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister, the naturalization procedure is an unprecedented effort in the history of Hungary, which "Hungary will continue to conduct with the same commitment and effort in future." Mr. Semjén said that it is important to realize that Hungarian naturalization is against the interests of successor states, who accordingly often try to hinder the process though disinformation, but without much success. In fact, they have now more or less accepted the fact that the naturalization procedure is an unparalleled success, a process that cannot be impeded," he added.

The Deputy Prime Minister also noted that the scope of the efforts of the policy for Hungarian communities abroad – which was renewed in 2010 – is expanding. As examples, he mentioned the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program, within which young Hungarians are sent to diaspora organizations abroad to facilitate their community-building work, and the various thematic years that focus on Hungarian kindergartens or schools abroad. He also pointed out that the Government attaches great importance to supporting the vocational training of young Hungarians abroad, and to the economy, which – according to Mr. Semjén – is vital to assuring their continued livelihoods.



Efforts of Transylvanian Hungarians and Szeklerland to realize self-determination introduced in Brussels

The President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT), the head of the Szekler National Council (SZNT) and the President of the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania (EMNP) Zsolt Szilágyi initiated a meeting with the President of the EU's Committee of the Regions Markku Markkula. The meeting took place on 14 July in Brussels.

At a previous joint meeting, the EMNT and the SZNT wrote to the Committee of the Regions. The main topics of the meeting were the SZNT's European civic initiative on



the issue of ensuring equal opportunities for regions, and the resolutions of Szeklerland's local governments aimed at the establishment of an independent and unified administrative region in Szeklerland.

Speaking at the event, the head of the SZNT Balázs Izsák said that Szeklerland is interested in the adoption of an EU regulation which does not violate the regions' equal opportunities and does not allow Member States to violate democratic principles. He added that the autonomy of Szeklerland is also in the interest of Romania. Referring to Romania's public administration reforms, the President of the EMNT László Tókécs expressed his regret that the Romanian government plans to abolish the administrative sovereignty of Szeklerland's counties, adding that "even the communist regime was more generous with Szeklerland." The head of the EMNP Zsolt Szilágyi said that Romania has a strongly centralized system of state administration which should be restructured according to the principles of federalism and European self-government. Mr. Szilágyi stressed that historic regions like Szeklerland would be able to realize their own self-governance.



Gombaszög Summer Camp ends

The 2015 Gombaszög Summer Camp was officially opened on 15 July. The event was addressed by State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi, the head of the foreign affairs committee of Hungary's National Assembly Zsolt Németh, the president of the students network Róza Kotiers and the main organizer of the event Örs Orosz.

Speaking at the camp, state secretary Árpád János Potápi emphasized the importance of summer open universities and other events of this kind, and their effect on strengthening national cohesion and Hungarian identity. Mr. Potápi said that one of the major aims of the current policy for Hungarian communities abroad is to foster Hungarian communities' prosperity in their homeland and develop Hungarian-language vocational education in the Carpathian Basin. The state secretary also stressed Hungary's solidarity with Transcarpathian Hungarians.

Opening the event, the head of the foreign affairs committee of the National Assembly Zsolt Németh congratulated the main organizer of the camp Örs Orosz on receiving the Csaba Lőrincz award. Mr. Németh recalled that the tradition of open universities in the Carpathian Basin started in Slovakia, since summer camps organized by Slovakian Hungarians served as a model for events of this kind in other regions. The head of the foreign affairs committee also drew attention to next year's elections, and the importance of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between nations.

Petition of Hungarians is rejected by Slovakia's Ministry of Education

A civil initiative supported by several Hungarian organizations in Slovakia to increase the number of Hungarian mother-tongue classes and optional classes at schools has been rejected by Slovakia's Ministry of Education. The petition was initiated after the



Ministry of Education presented its curriculum for the lower grades of primary schools for the coming academic year, which envisages a considerably lower number of classes for mother-tongue education in Hungarian-language schools than in Slovakian-language ones. The initiators of the petition demanded the elimination of this disparity, and an increase in the number of Hungarian history classes, in order to enable school children to become acquainted with the history of Hungary. The petition was signed by 26,452 people and was supported by several civil and political advocacy organizations from the Hungarian community in Slovakia. It was submitted to the Ministry of Education on 28 May, while on 16 July the Ministry declared it unjustified and rejected all of its three points.



János Lázár: Hungary is ready to take in Transcarpathian Hungarians

Informing the daily Napi Gazdaság, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office János Lázár said that Hungary is ready to take in Hungarians from Western Ukraine's Transcarpathia if they are mistreated. The Minister said that the Government's most important goal was to ensure that Transcarpathian Hungarians can make a living in their homeland, and He said the Government would provide new benefits for the ethnic Hungarian community in Ukraine. Mr. Lázár stressed that the Government will provide supplementary pay for teachers, and funding for children's meals, and offer financial aid to local governments that need it. Mr. Lázár reiterated the Government's concern over recent armed clashes in Western Ukraine's Munkács/Mukacheve. He said that Hungary expects the Ukraine government to guarantee the safety of every Hungarian in Transcarpathia. The Minister emphasized that the Hungarian government must protect every Hungarian.