

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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## Szekler Mikó College of Sepsiszentgyörgy is re-nationalized

According to the decision of the Ploiesti Court of Appeal, the Reformed Church of Transylvania would be stripped of the ownership of the Szekler Mikó College of Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, as the Ploiesti Court of Appeal abolished the decision of the Buzău court which had stated that 1,13 million leu (254,694 EUR) had been seized from the Reformed Church of Transylvania. As a result of the decision, a deputy of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Attila Markó and former legal advisor of the Reformed Church Tamás Marosán who had taken part in the restitution of the property, have been finally sentenced to a suspended prison term by the Ploiesti Court of Appeal.

On Wednesday Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén told the Hungarian news agency MTI that the Hungarian government was shocked to learn that the deputy of the RMDSZ Attila Markó has been handed a suspended prison term in a case concerning the restitution of the Szekler Mikó College to the Reformed Church. The Deputy Prime Minister highlighted that endeavors by the Romanian government to re-nationalize properties restituted to ecclesiastical organizations, including the Szekler Mikó College, are unacceptable both from the point of view of churches and that of the Hungarian community.

Informing the MTI, the head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen has said that the decision of the Ploiesti Court of Appeal has set a dangerous precedent, since it “opens a gate through which restitution decisions adopted in a similar way might also be cancelled.” He added that “Everything we have done in the field of restitution during the past two decades might be put at a risk.”

As a result of the decision of the Ploiesti Court of Appeal concerning the re-nationalization of the Szekler Mikó College, bishop Béla Kató resigned from his office at the extraordinary general meeting of the Transylvanian Reformed Church held in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca.

## The RMDSZ decides to quit the Romanian government

On Thursday the Standing Council of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) decided to quit the Romanian government. The RMDSZ said that the fact that the vast majority of Hungarians had voted for Klaus Johannis in the Romanian presidential election is considered a message from Hungarians that participation in the government is not a priority now, and the RMDSZ should pay more attention to community building. The head of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen said that the final decision considering his party's quitting the government will be made by the Representatives Council of the Alliance scheduled for 13 December.

## Hungarians in Sepsiszentgyörgy demand Romania's compliance with its 1918 promises

On Saturday demonstrators gathered in Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe at the call of the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP), demanding the constitutional recognition of the rights of Hungarians and Romania's compliance with its promises made in the 1918



Gyulafehérvár Declaration. The demonstrators (whose number was estimated to be about two thousand according to the organizers, five hundred according to the police) were chanting slogans like “We are at home!”, “Autonomy!”, “Down with Trianon!” at the square in front of the government office of Kovászna megye/Județul Covasna, and were holding tables with Romanian and English-language labels such as “Collective rights!”, “Free Transylvania!” and “Autonomous Szeklerland!”. The head of the MPP Zsolt Biró read up the petition in which the locally elected representatives of his party addressed the Romanian government and urged the constitutional confirmation of the Gyulafehérvár Declaration. The petition was handed over to the official of the county’s government office.



### Memorial Plaque to victims of Benes Decrees unveiled

“A crime can be forgiven only if it has been confessed” – the head of the Parliament’s foreign affairs committee Zsolt Németh said in the Reformed church of Hetény/Chotin in southern Slovakia where a memorial plaque dedicated to the post-WWII deportation of ethnic Hungarians from Czechoslovakia to Hungary was inaugurated. Addressing the event, Zsolt Németh welcomed the “promising development of Hungarian-Slovak relations,” including new border crossing points, bridges and energy links between the two countries. He added, however, that “time is ripe to raise tough issues,” including Slovakia’s approach to dual citizenship, reinstating Hungarian language rights, improving the schooling of ethnic Hungarians and the dispute over the withdrawal of the Benes Decrees. Mr. Németh said that “the Basic Law of Hungary obliges us to make the caring for the Hungarian community in Slovakia a part of our everyday life.”



### Hungarians in Vojvodina need a minority action plan

The second session of the delegation of the EU-Serbia Stabilization and Association Parliamentary Committee was held between 26 and 27 November at the Strasbourg headquarters of the European Parliament. The session was attended by members of the EP and representatives of the Serbian Parliament. During the meeting the European Parliament presented an open and cordial attitude towards Serbia. The members of the delegation emphasized that further positive steps had taken place in Serbia during the previous period, and highlighted the development of Serbia’s relations with the countries of the region, especially those with Hungary. The second day of the session was devoted to human rights and fundamental freedoms, including minority rights as well. A member of the European Parliament from Vojvodina Andor Deli said that the most important problem in Serbia regarding minority rights is not the adoption of laws and agreements, but their application in practice.



## Potápi: the tragedy of Vojvodina Hungarians must be remembered

Opening an exhibition commemorating the 70th anniversary of the 1944-45 events in Vojvodina on Friday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that everyone must remember the tragedy of Vojvodina Hungarians year on year. Speaking at the exhibition of the Keskenyúton Foundation entitled “The Golgotha of Vojvodina Hungarians 1944-45” (Délvidéki Magyar Golgota 1944-45) held in the House of Hungarians (Magyarság Háza) in Budapest, the State Secretary said that the Hungarian nation and people working responsibly for Hungarians have conscience, and the memory of the victims would never be erased from the memory of the nation. Mr. Potápi expressed his condolence to the families of the victims and underlined that their only crime had been their Hungarian nationality.

